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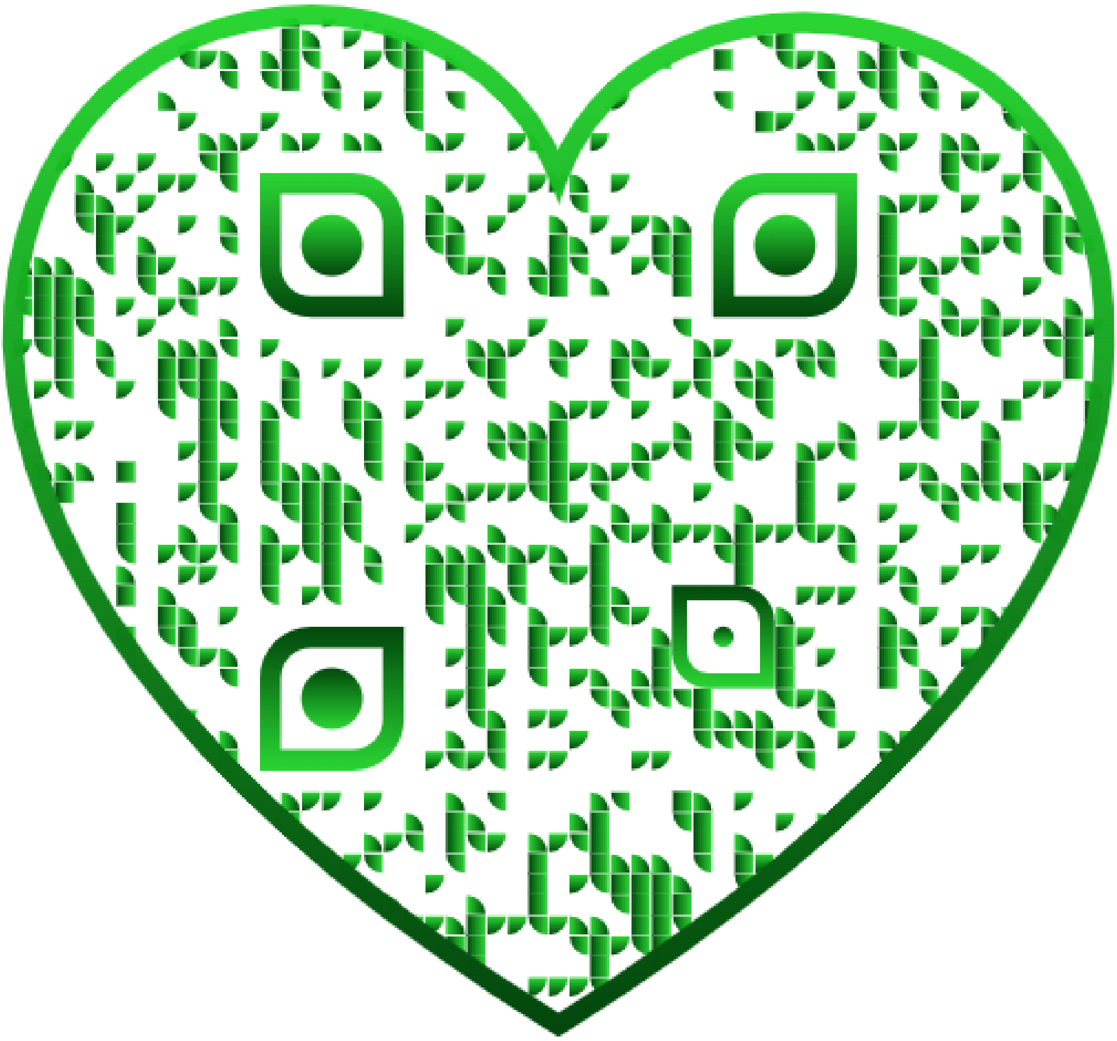

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WELCOME

David/stock.adobe.com

HELLO

At this time of year, wouldn't it be lovely to be able to jump into your campervan and head south for some winter sun? Sadly, for most of us, work and family commitments mean that's just a dream. But that that doesn't mean you can't get away at all. There are still loads of places you can explore around the UK in the winter – from city breaks to coastal escapes – and in this issue we explore some of our favourite destinations and campsites.

You may also have noticed that Christmas is just around the corner and I know from personal experience that any assistance in the present-buying process is worth its weight in gold (not to mention frankincense and myrrh). Have a look at our gift guide on page 75 for some brilliant stocking filler ideas for the campervanner in your life.

Top of that wish list should be your favourite magazine – and with our special festive offer you can get five issues of *Campervan* for £5 or 12 issues for £64.99. Visit **motorhome.ma/cpvnxmasgift25** for more information.

If you're in holiday planning mode for next summer already, we've just revealed our Premier Parks for 2026; go to **premier-parks.co.uk** where you'll find the full list.

Happy campervanning!

Iain

IAIN DUFF | Editor

COVER PICTURE | bruno kickner/Alamy

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This publication is printed by Warners Midlands PLC Telephone: 01778 391000

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CONTENTS

DECEMBER 2025

ROAD TRIPS

6 DESTINATION OF THE MONTH
The cobbled streets of York

8 CO DONEGAL
A quick jaunt to Ireland

16 CHATSWORTH
Exploring Derbyshire's historic country estate

22 LONDON
The ultimate UK city destination?

28 CITY BREAK CAMPSITES
15 great sites for urban explorers

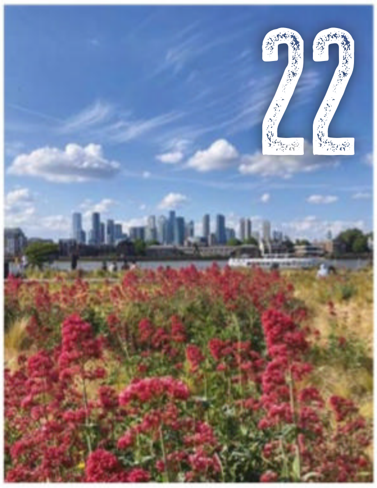
VANLIFE

36 EAST IS EAST
Travelling through Scotland towards Orkney

42 FRENCH FRILLS
A historic theme park in France

44 SELLING YOUR 'VAN
The easy way to get a quick sale

49 TOILET TALK
A quick guide to a new separation loo



IN THIS ISSUE

REGULARS

34 MEET THE CAMPSITE OWNERS
Manor Wood, Cheshire

52 NEC NEWS SPECIAL
Highlights of the UK's biggest campervan show

55 NEWS
What's going on in the world of campervans

72 LIFE BEYOND BRICKS
Updates from Tash's life on the road

75 XMAS GIFT GUIDE
What to get the campervanner in your life

NEW CAMPERVANS

58 PANAMA P1OE HYBRID
One of the UK's first plug-in hybrid campervans

64 ELDDIS WHIRLWIND GTV 563
A new 2026 offering from the UK manufacturer

68 CONSORT DUET FS
Extra seating up front and a proper bedroom

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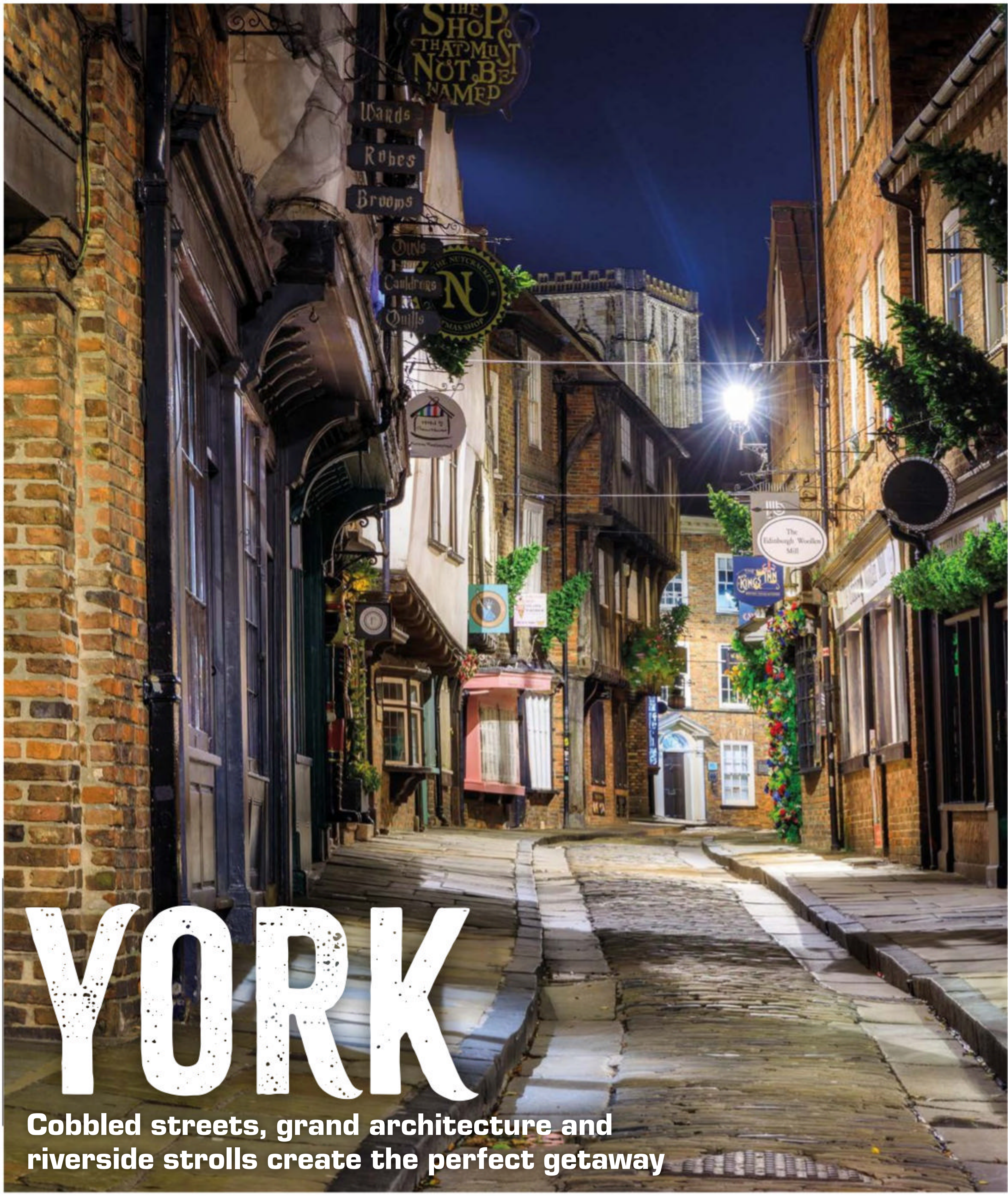
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Robes
Brooms
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Quills
THE NUTCRACKER CHRISTMAS SHOP
The Edinburgh Woollen Mill

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YORK

Cobbled streets, grand architecture and riverside strolls create the perfect getaway

With its winding streets, cosy pubs and rich history, York offers something for everyone, especially at this time of year. A blend of the old and the new, it's the perfect place for a family break, a romantic getaway for two or simply a fun weekend away.

The Shambles is a historic cobbled shopping street in the heart of York that bustles with activity all day. And, if it gets a little bit too busy, you can find tranquillity in the York Museum Gardens.

Other attractions in the city include the awe-inspiring York Minster and the ancient city walls, the Jorvik Viking Centre and the Castle Museum, where life through the centuries in the city is recreated in a fascinating living history project.

For a relaxing way to enjoy the city's picturesque views, you can take a river cruise along the Ouse.

EXPLORE

Peter Austin/stock.adobe.com

CHRISTMAS MARKET

York's award-winning Christmas Market runs from 13 November to 21 December this year. Head on over to the alpine chalet shops on Parliament Street and St Sampson's Square where you'll find a magical array of local crafts, artisan products and seasonal treats – with a glass of mulled wine!

W visityork.org/christmas

DISCOVER

NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM

A treasure trove for train enthusiasts, showcasing a vast collection of historic locos and carriages. From the opulent royal trains to the iconic Flying Scotsman, the exhibits chronicle the evolution of rail travel.

W railwaymuseum.org.uk

STAY

Richard Mooney

YORK NABURN LOCK CARAVAN PARK

Featuring a brand-new facilities building and a revamped shop, this is an adults-only site, just four miles from York. A perfect choice for breaks to visit the historic city – with a park and ride moments away and a regular bus service that calls at the site entrance.

W bit.ly/3XkHcOV

PREMIER PARK 2026

DONEGAL DIARY

At this point in the year we had hoped to be somewhere in southern Spain or Portugal, perhaps enjoying a cheeky midweek *menu del día* or tucking into our third pastel de nata of the morning. Instead, due to important issues needing to be fixed with both ourselves and the 'van, we were entering our fifth month of vanlife, mostly spent on my parents' driveway just outside of Belfast.

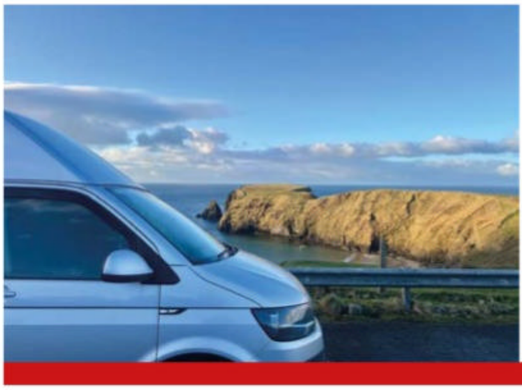
This certainly was not in our plans as we drove off the Eurostar back in October, and yet if we have learnt anything from two years living full time on the road, it is that plans may be made but quite often they need to be adjusted or abandoned altogether.

The extended time back in the UK had, of course, afforded us precious time with family and

MAIN PHOTO
Exploring Muckross Head

Words & pictures **|** Nigel Cooke

How a Spanish siesta turned into an Irish jig



ABOVE
LEFT TO RIGHT
Sunrise at Malin Beg

Photography season at sunset on Dooey Beach

INSET
Just us down at Malin Beg

BELOW
Dooey Beach

friends, but we also felt we needed a short break to reset our minds and bodies. With a settled weather forecast over the coming week, we saw an opening and headed north to Portrush, a town we had called home for seven years, to catch up with friends, before making a break for the border and beautiful County Donegal. As an aside, the aire in Portrush is very popular, and during our stay we noted up to 16 additional 'vans using the overflow area.

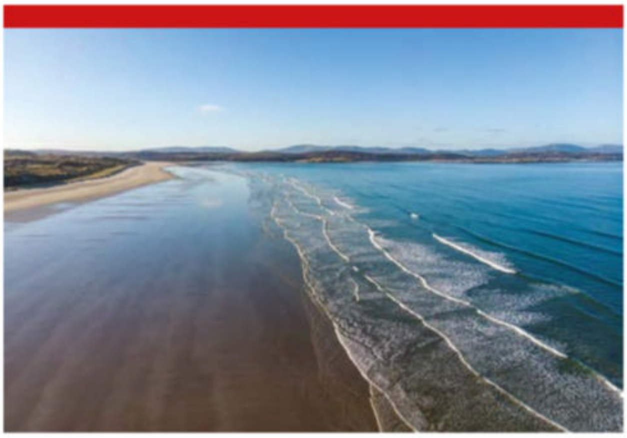
The drive in Glenveagh National Park is stunning, and we took our time winding through the Derryveagh Mountains, past the Poisoned Glen, with the unmistakable peak of Errigal dominating the view. We had hoped to climb this popular mountain while here, having had to turn back a few years previously due to the weather; however, Nicola had been carrying an injury, so sadly not possible on this particular trip.

I had planned our first stop at Magheraroarty, a location we know well, and one of a handful of motorhome service points dotted around the county. Since our last visit, two public toilets, which are open 24/7, have also been installed here. The car park is huge, overlooking the harbour and beach, which stretches out for miles along the peninsula.

From the harbour, you can also catch a ferry to the islands of Inishbofin (seasonal) and Tory (three times daily, weather permitting). In the summer season there is also a small café serving all manner of tasty treats. Just over a mile away you will also find a rather nice and welcoming pub.

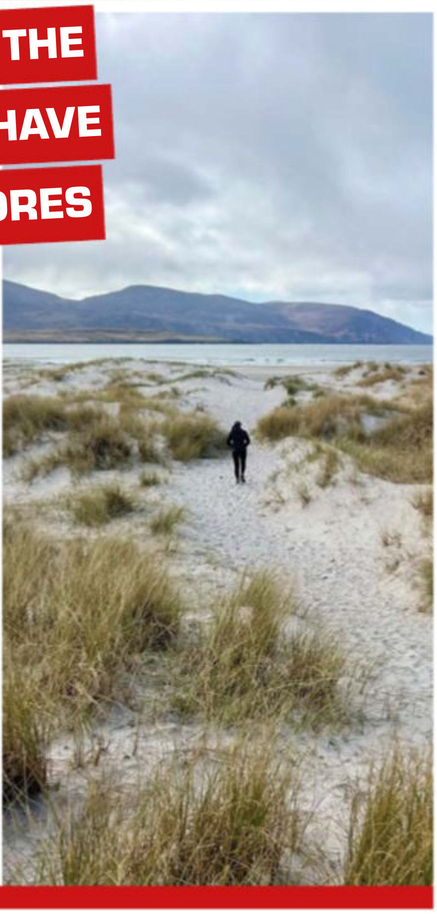
While the sun was shining, the wind was biting, and we enjoyed a warming cup of tea in the 'van, watching passengers climb aboard the 3pm ferry to Tory. Sadly, at present the island is without an elected king, with the last one, Patsy Dan Rogers, having passed away in 2018. I first came to know of Tory Island and the King of Tory, Patsy Dan, while listening to the audiobook *Round Ireland With a Fridge*. I'd certainly recommend it as an accompaniment on your own Wild Atlantic Way road trip.

A little way along the dunes from the car park, you will also find the Boats of Magheraroarty, a collection of colourful old shipping vessels, long since abandoned, which can



> THE EROSION ON THE DRAMATIC CLIFFS TELLS THE STORY OF THE WILD ATLANTIC ROLLERS THAT HAVE TRAVELLED A THOUSAND MILES TO THESE SHORES

Pixabay



make for a nice photograph or two. Soon, the last of the evening sun was retreating across the car park, and with the heater on, we settled in for the night.

The following morning, Nicola decided that a refreshing paddle in the sea may help her various ailments, and so we made our way down to the shoreline. Now, I'm not sure what constitutes a paddle, but I'm pretty sure it needs to be for more than a few seconds. Such was the freezing water on her bare feet that she didn't stay in long, although the pain in her extremities had temporarily helped her forget the ankle injury, so I guess it had the desired effect.

With the 'van packed, we made our way along to Bunbeg, where a popular shipwreck has stood since the 1970s. It had been a few years since our last visit, with the frequent storms that pass over this area having quite an impact on its condition. The wreck is still a popular destination for photographers, especially at night, where the dark skies in the area can be a perfect backdrop to the wreck.

There are two things you soon realise travelling in these parts. Firstly, just how vast the beaches are at low tide, often being able to walk for a couple of miles on hard, flat sand. The other, especially in the low season, is that you will often have these places all to yourself, as was the case for us on this occasion.

Returning to the 'van, we had a spot of lunch before carrying on with our journey. Once again the road sticking close to the coast, providing incredible views as we slowly ventured south. As is often the case, it's normally around this time of the day that the weary 'van dweller has started to look for a place to park up for the night.

I had marked a couple of spots, and thankfully got lucky with our first choice, Dooey Beach. To get here one has to venture from the N56; the grass protruding from the centre of the single-track lane is a sure sign of its remoteness. It's once

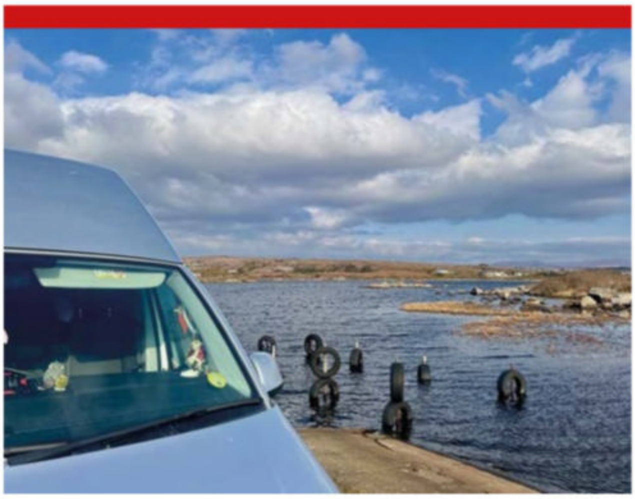
✔ TOP TIP

● Rubbish disposal in Donegal, and, in fact, throughout Ireland, can be challenging. Our advice is to try and empty little and often. Recycling bins are more readily available (for plastic and aluminium mostly)

ABOVE CLOCKWISE
The County Donegal countryside

A quick stop at Tramore Beach

BELOW
Time for coffee and a view



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again at times such as these that we are thankful for a smaller 'van to navigate such tight spaces.

Arriving into the empty car park, we quickly got ready and headed out along the short boardwalk between the sand dunes, with the beach soon coming into view. And what a view! Once again, the flat sand stretched on for miles, flanked on one side by a small outcrop of rocks.

Atop these rocks, you will find Wild Atlantic Sauna, which, at the time of writing, seems to be open for bookings at the weekend. The views here, while enjoying the relaxing environment of a hot sauna, must be incredible, and it's certainly something we would have partaken in had it been open. With the promise of a decent sunset, I spent the rest of the evening enjoying time with the camera, joined at one point by a couple of surfers who showed off their expertise riding the waves as the sky behind provided a spectacular and fiery backdrop.

The following morning, and once again after a very quiet night, we made our way back out along the single-track lanes to reach the N56, before carrying on towards our next destination, Portnoo. This has been an area we have wanted to visit, especially as the beach at Nairn hosts a weekly parkrun.

There are five of these events held in Donegal, with the one here at Nairn being the most beautiful given it is run completely on the beach. When we lived in Portrush, we were fortunate to have a similar beach parkrun; however, we would argue the one here is perhaps even more spectacular. Just don't tell our friends back in Portrush we have said that.

Having timed our visit with the low tide, we parked the 'van and made our way out across the vast expanse of sand, over to the abandoned monastic island of Inishkeel. In the sixth century, this tidal island was home to a small settlement of monks, led by Saint Conall Cael. There are the remains of two twelfth century churches, St Connell's and St Mary's, and the island remains popular for pilgrims.

Although now long abandoned, a

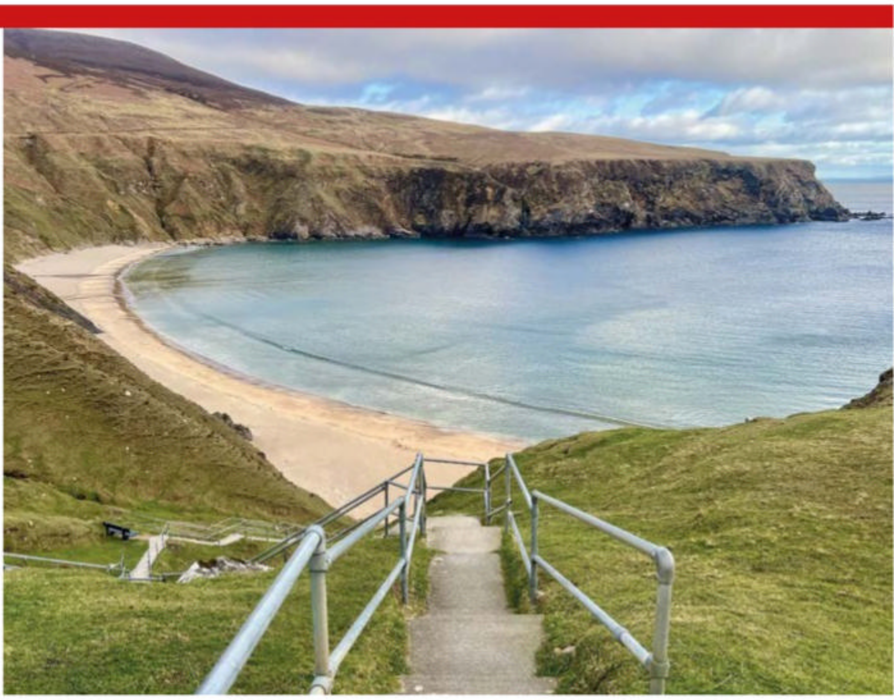
✔ TOP TIP

● In the summer months you will find lots of well-maintained portable toilets along the Wild Atlantic Way
W thewildatlanticway.com

TOP LEFT
Sunset at Dooey Beach

ABOVE
Our campervan blending in at Malin Beg

RIGHT
Bad Eddie shipwreck



census in the 1840s recorded a population of around 120. Just be careful, as this is a tidal island, you are at a real risk of being cut off, so plan your visit accordingly. Arriving back at the 'van, we relaxed for a few hours, allowing the inclement weather to pass over. Leaving Portnoo, climbing steeply above the car park, we were treated to incredible views out towards Inishkeel, and once again this short road trip delivered far beyond our expectations.

Our slow progress had now meant that on this last afternoon we would have to make up some miles if we were to arrive at our planned overnight destination of Malin Beg. We afforded ourselves a 30-minute walk on Tramore Beach, another location one could easily spend a day, along with a brief stop at Assaranca Waterfall (Eas a' Ranca), before making our way up and over the spectacular Glengesh Pass (Glen of the Swans).

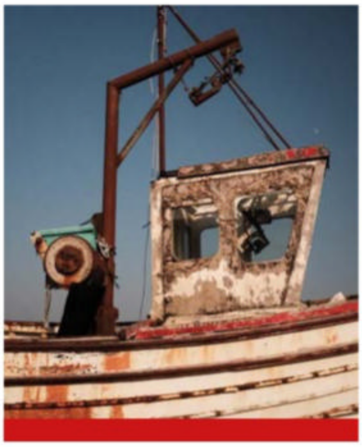
This pass, which connects the locations of Ardara and Glencolumbkille, is one of two glaciated valleys in the area. Once again, we had the added privilege of being one of only a handful of vehicles on the road, allowing us to fully appreciate the views. I can imagine in the busier summer months, especially given the proximity to the Slieve League Cliffs, that this road may become quite congested.

ABOVE CENTRE Remote Tramore Beach

ABOVE RIGHT The steps down to Silver Strand Beach

RIGHT Fishing boat at Magheraroarty

Leaving the pass behind, we were soon travelling through the vast Crocknamurrin Mountain Bog, which, even with the favourable weather we were experiencing, still felt wild and desolate. I can only imagine how remote this place would feel with a storm raging through. Passing through the village of Glencolumbkille, you also have the opportunity to visit the folk village, which we have done before.



✓ TOP TIP

● The folk village at Glencolumbkille is only open seasonally, so check the website for details
W glenfolkvillage.com

Before parking up for the night, we made a quick detour down to the cottages that overlook the pier in Malin Beg, with views out over the sea stacks towards the Malin Beg Promontory Fort and beyond. An incredible location, although the biting wind once again made for a shorter visit than perhaps we would have liked.

We soon arrived in the Malin Beg car park, which sits overlooking the beautiful horseshoe-shaped Silver Strand beach, a popular spot for travellers on the Wild Atlantic Way. The car park is slightly sloping, but with the last of the day trippers long departed, we manoeuvred ourselves onto the flattest spot.

OUR 'VAN

Nigel and Nicola Cooke live in their 2018 VW Transporter high-top 'van full time and work on the road, sometimes parked up in beautiful locations. It's small enough to park in a normal parking space, but with seemingly endless storage, or at least enough for Nicola to squirrel away clothes for every season

STAY AT

Overnight stop at Tory Island Ferry, Magheraroarty Pier, Magheraroarty, Gortahork, Co Donegal
what3words
headlights.gathers.bobs

Overnight stop at Dooey Beach, Dooey, Co Donegal
what3words
satins.clench.downsize

Overnight stop at Malin Beg, Málainn Bhig, Co Donegal

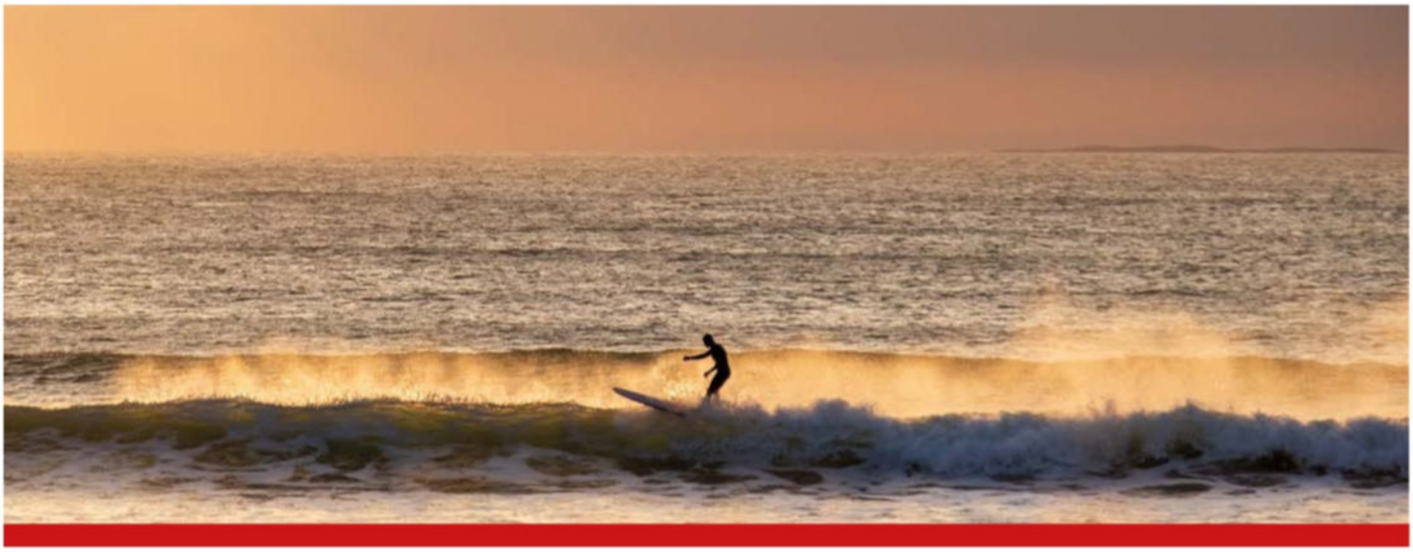
ABOVE
Sea Stacks at Malin Beg

BELOW
Surfers at Dooey beach

The following morning, our last on this short trip out west, we carried on around the peninsula to Muckross Head, popular not only for its dramatic outlook, but also for the potential for wildlife spotting with puffins, razorbills, guillemots and kittiwakes in season. The erosion on the dramatic cliffs tells the story of the wild Atlantic rollers that have travelled a thousand miles to these shores, and it must make for an impressive view in the midst of a storm.

There you will also find one of the 80 Eire signs that were placed aground the coast to warn bombers during the war that they were flying over a neutral country. The location was a perfect way to say gaoodbye to this little stretch of wild Ireland, and we commented that the area, along with Inishowen to the north, makes Donegal one of the best places to visit Ireland in a campervan.

Our time in this most beautiful county of Ireland had come to an end, and as we drove across the border, we left with a smile and a promise to return.



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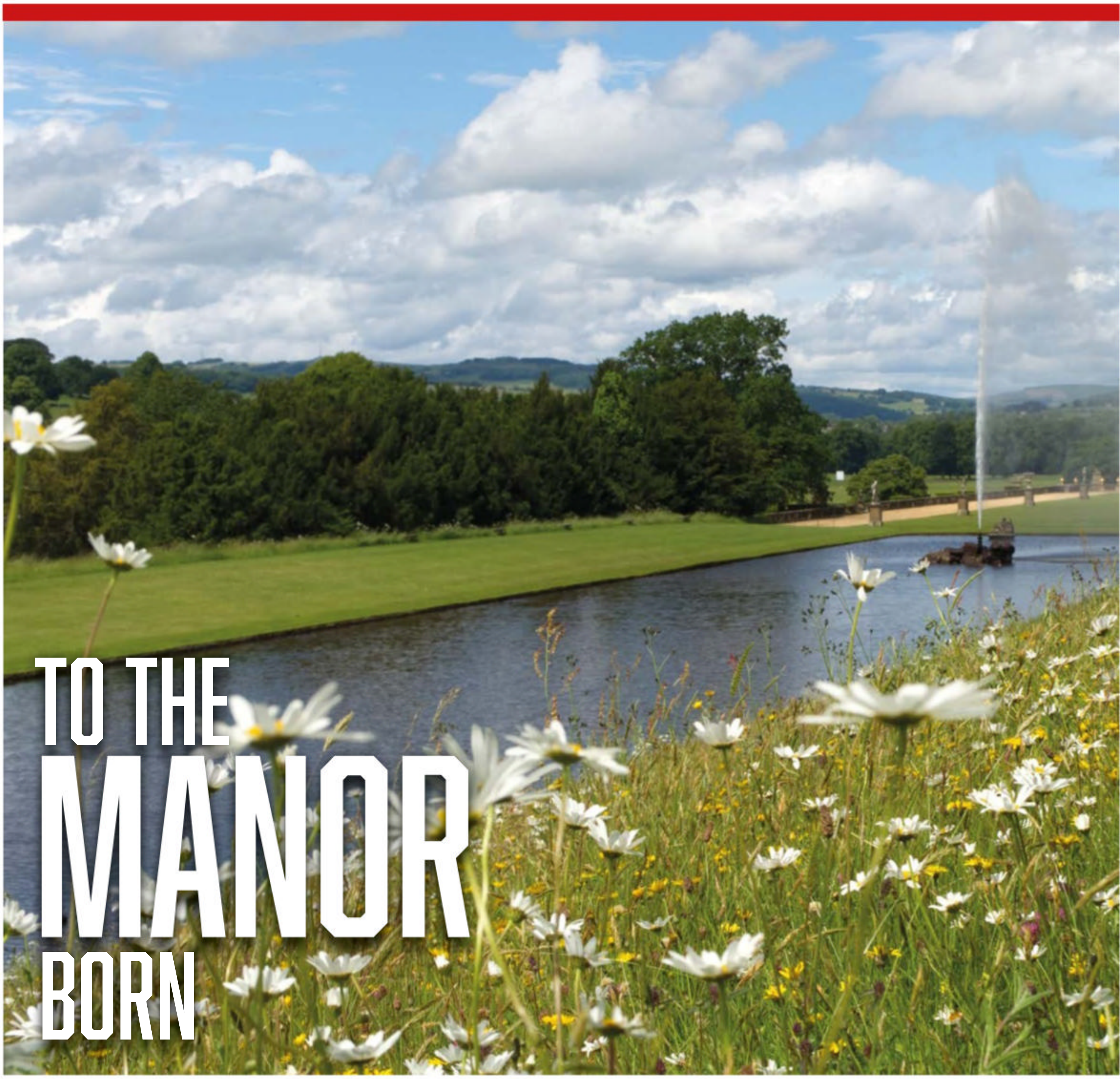
SCAN ME



TO THE MANOR BORN

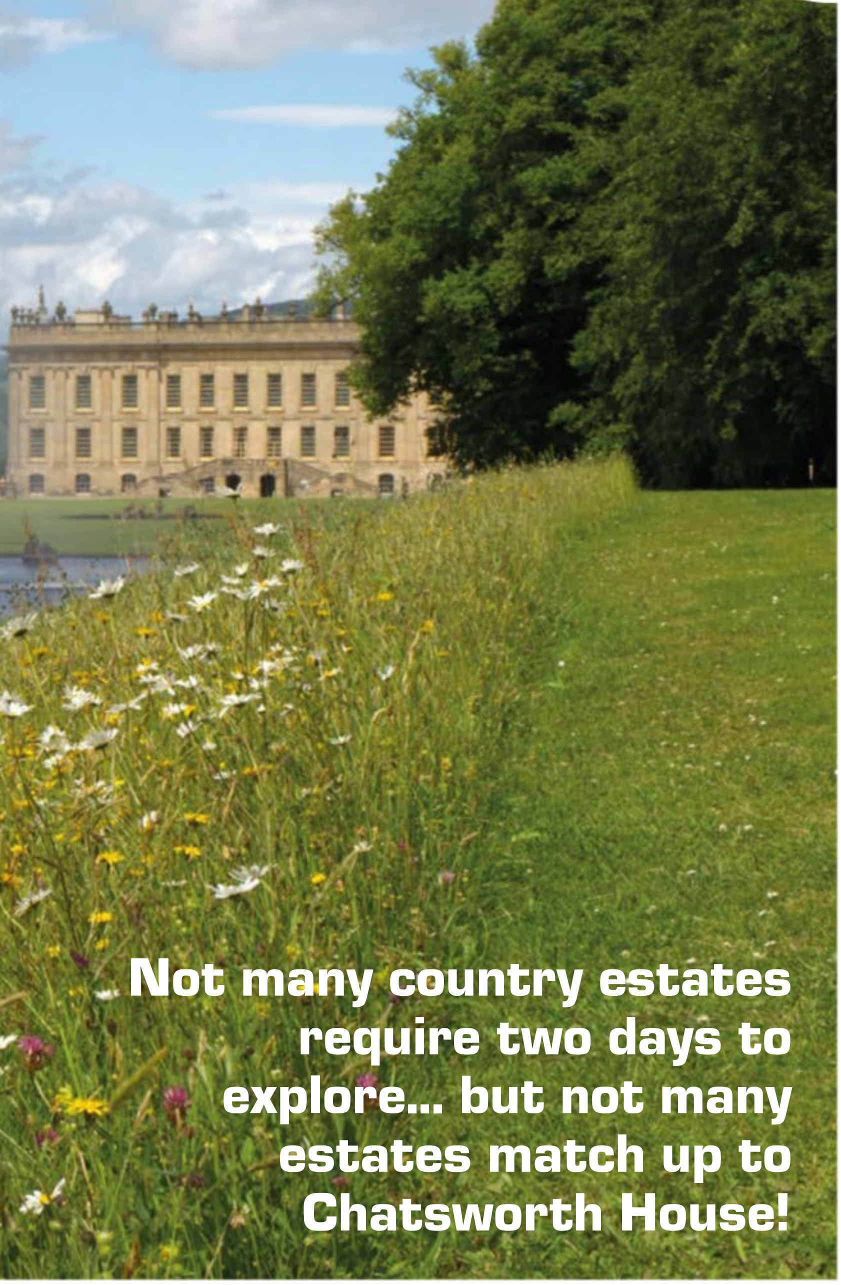
Sometimes it's nice to pitch in a location where places to visit are easily accessible, on your doorstep. And the Caravan and Motorhome Club site at Chatsworth Park offers a pretty impressive doorstep!

The park itself covers around 1,000 acres, most of which is open to the general public without charge. There are cattle and sheep as well as deer, so if you are travelling with canine companions, as we were, you'll need to keep them on a lead.

It's a fine place to take a walk and you can follow the meanderings of the River Derwent, admiring its wildlife. Sand martins skimmed the water, nesting in the banks. Grey wagtails were flitting along the river's edge, with tufted ducks diving for their dinner and then bobbing back to the surface again like corks. Apparently, all three native species of woodpecker: greater and lesser spotted, together with green, can be seen on the estate.

MAIN PICTURE
Chatsworth House and flowers

Words & pictures ▮ Helen Stockton



Not many country estates require two days to explore... but not many estates match up to Chatsworth House!

✔ TOP TIP

● Check out the ticket prices as it may be cheaper to visit on a weekday than a weekend

The park plays host to a number of annual events as well as a whole array of festive fairs. However, if you are planning to stay on site for one of these, an advance booking well ahead of the date would appear to be a sensible option.

We were visiting in early June (when no events were scheduled), and the site was still fully booked. In fact, we only had two pitches to choose from.

Not that this was problematic, as both options were fine, and it did save the inevitable dithering about which spot met our particular requirements best, but it was busy!

Being at Chatsworth for only a short stay, visiting the house was a definite must. Whilst, unsurprisingly, dogs are not allowed in the house, it is a dog-friendly place to visit. There were dog statues in the garden and a special area set aside in the café for canines and their owners, a good provision of doggy drinking bowls, and unfettered access for our furry

➡

ABOVE RIGHT
TOP TO BOTTOM
Baslow village

Chatsworth's lovely lawns

Informal planting

THE LAKE TO THE FRONT GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF THE HOUSE FLOATING ON WATER AND THE EMPEROR FOUNTAIN COMPLETES THE PICTURE OF GRANDEUR

friends, on-lead, in the garden. We were visiting with friends, fellow campers and dog owners, who had visited the house before, so they offered to look after our two, enabling us to tour the house together. Normally, one of us waits in the 'van with the pooches whilst the other goes around, and then we swap, although the café and garden offered an alternative solution in this instance.

Chatsworth House Trust is a registered charity, and family members, Lord and Lady Burlington, still live in part of the house, which gives it a rather relaxed feel. Photography, even with flash, is welcomed, and interior signage is kept to a minimum, but the uniformed room guides were very informative and worth chatting to. You find out so much more about the house and its history if you take a moment to ask. The Painted Hall was a point in question. As its name suggests, the paintings on the walls and ceilings are a key feature. The room guide explained that the depiction of scenes from the life of Julius Caesar was intended to flatter the newly crowned William III.

Another artwork that really benefited from an explanation was the apparently abstract design of ceramic tiles in the North Sketch Gallery. We did notice that some of the tiled pieces were glazed, whilst most were not, but it was not until we stopped to chat to the room guide that we learned the full significance of the installation. The tiles map the DNA of the twelfth Duke and Duchess, their son, Lord Burlington, and Lady Burlington, his wife.

ABOVE
Sculpture foregrounding the Canal Pond and Emperor Fountain

INSET
Beautiful peonies

✓ TOP TIP

● Talk to the room guides, you'll find out so much more

LEFT
Rustic support for the roses

BELOW
LEFT TO RIGHT
The kitchen garden

The door with the violin

A dog-friendly place to visit

The glazed tiles represent something of importance to each individual, a favourite walk around the grounds, a much-loved piece of music, other family members, and a stitching pattern handed down through the family. Fascinating! And without giving anything away, we might not have noticed the truth behind the violin hanging on the door in the State Music Room. As members of the Caravan and Motorhome Club we also had the benefit of staying on the campsite in the grounds, and receiving a free guidebook, so we were able to peruse some additional information later.

One mistake we did make, however, was to try and do the house and garden in one day. Short breaks can sometimes increase the tendency to overcram the itinerary at the expense of an in-depth exploration. The ticket was for the house and garden, but by the time we had toured the house, grabbed some lunch and headed outside, time, energy and the weather were not on our side, and we felt that a revisit the following day, to do the garden justice, was warranted. Unfortunately, this meant we had to buy another ticket for the garden as it was only valid on the day of issue. However, tickets on a weekday, when we were visiting, were considered off-peak and were a bit cheaper.

The exterior of the house is magnificent with the warm stone and gold gilding catching the sun. Chatsworth House is generally thought to have inspired Jane Austen's depiction of the fictional Pemberley, ancestral home of Mr Darcy, in *Pride and Prejudice*. The filming of the 2005 film adaptation of the novel, starring Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen, at Chatsworth House, cemented the connection. For many, Chatsworth House is indisputably Pemberley.

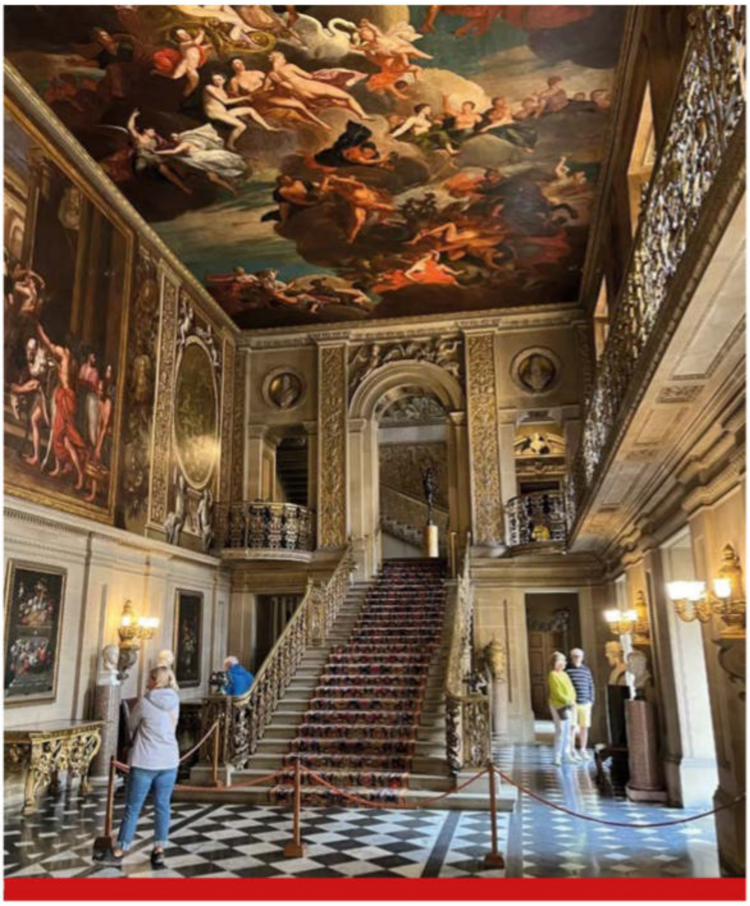
The garden does the house justice. The lake to the front, rather inauspiciously named 'The Canal Pond', gives the impression that the house floats on water, and the Emperor Fountain completes the picture of grandeur. On a windy day, however, it is best not to get too close, as the resulting spray can dampen enthusiasm. The fountain, as mentioned by one of the room guides when we were admiring it from inside the house, is not powered by electricity, instead relying on water pressure to produce a height of up to 90m. We were also advised to visit the remains of the Great Conservatory, a forerunner to Crystal Palace, the setting for the propagation of the Cavendish Banana, which was subsequently introduced to other banana-growing parts of the world.

FIND OUT MORE

- Chatsworth House, park and garden
W **chatsworth.org**
- The Devonshire Arms, Baslow
W **thedevonshirebaslow.com**

The popularity of this variety has led to a lack of genetic diversity in the fruit that puts a large part of the world's banana production at risk from disease.

Also, the cost of fuelling the coal-fired boiler, and the difficulty of supply during the First World War,



ABOVE
Well-behaved dogs are welcome

RIGHT
The Painted Hall

BELOW
The remains of the Great Conservatory

led to the demolition of the Great Conservatory after the war, so that only the supporting walls can be seen.

The remains still give a significant impression of its scale, however, and outside the walls were long borders of peonies that were particularly striking at the time of our visit. We decided against getting lost in the maze which has been planted on the site of the conservatory's interior. We did risk a visit to the Coal Hole and Tunnel, to add a subterranean frisson to the garden visiting experience, although it's probably wise to wear waterproof footwear.

The garden offers something for everyone with the Broad Walk providing fine views of the property, and the memorial urn a poignant focal point. For those with limited mobility or restricted energy for a lot of walking, there was a land train around part of the grounds for an additional charge.

The Rock Garden makes the average domestic rockery pale into insignificance, with the largest stone construction 14m high and sporting its own waterfall. The Cottage Garden offered a different botanical experience with its lovely colour palette and traditional planting. However, even allowing a second day to explore the garden, we still didn't manage to see everything that the grounds had to offer!

✔ TOP TIP

- Allow two days, if possible, for your visit, one for the house and one for the garden

Whilst Chatsworth House occupied us for most of our short stay, we did venture out for a walk, through Baslow, a charming village at the heart of the Peak District. We also spent a pleasant evening there, dining with our dogs at The Devonshire Arms, which was within comfortable walking distance of the site. Our short stay in the Peak District was one of the rare occasions that we didn't take our small 'van off site.

However, with so much to do within easy striking distance, there really wasn't any need to leave. It really was the perfect location for a short break.

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CAPTIAL GAIN

Discovering a green haven in Greater London – and discovering that winter's a great time for a city break

As Paul and I wander along sun-dappled paths through ancient woodland, a multitude of birds singing their hearts out, it's hard to believe we're still in Greater London. Wind back a few days.... we had a bit of unexpected free time, so looked up our nearest campsite. This was Abbey Wood Caravan and Motorhome Club site in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, around two miles south of the River Thames, and 13 miles away from home.

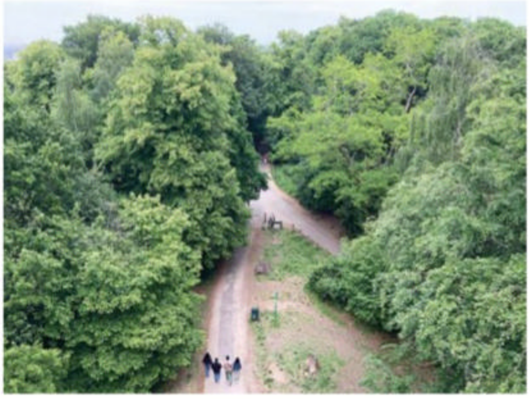
While planning our route we noticed a landmark with an intriguing name: Severndroog Castle. Though it turns out that Severndroog Castle isn't, strictly speaking, a castle. Rather, it's an eighteenth century, Gothic-style folly commissioned by Lady Anne James as a memorial to her husband, Sir William James. She wanted to celebrate his most famous exploit when he destroyed the fleet and stronghold of 'pirates' on the island fortress Survarnadurg (Severndroog) in India in 1755. Although, whilst the British may have considered these men as 'pirates' they were, in fact, simply protecting their naval waters from British Colonial expansion into India.

We made our way through a cosy tea room on the ground floor to climb a stone spiral staircase up to the viewing platform on the roof. Severndroog Castle occupies such an elevated position that it was chosen, in 1788, to test new lamps for use in coastal lighthouses. The lamps were placed on the roof of the castle, and gentlemen living within 30 miles were asked to comment on the brightness of the various lights.

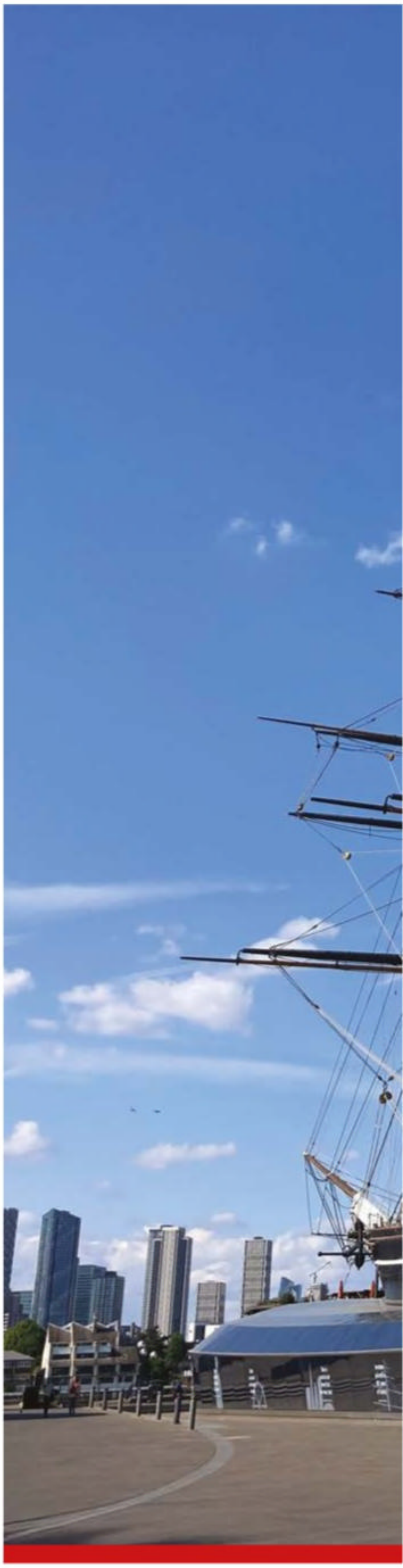
Oxleas Woodlands, surrounding the castle, is one of the last remaining ancient woodlands in London. It covers 130 hectares and is made up of meadows and six separate woods. We set off on a walk through Castle Wood and Jack Wood. From the castle the footpath led us down a

✔ TOP TIP

The viewing platform on the roof of Severndroog Castle is open between 10am and 4pm on Sundays. The tea room is open Thursday to Sunday.



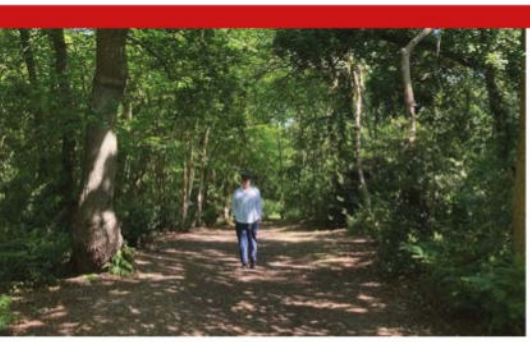
MAIN PIC
The Cutty Sark, Greenwich

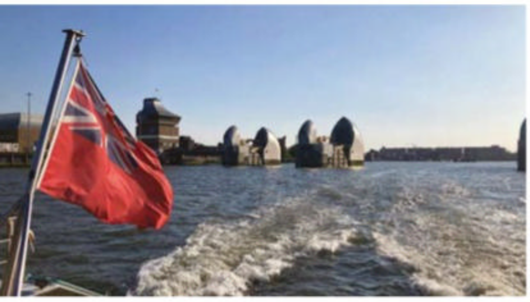


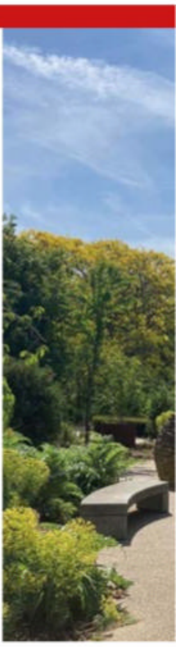
Words & pictures | Sue Phillips

YOU CAN'T GO TO GREENWICH WITHOUT VISITING THE CUTTY SARK, THE WORLD'S OLDEST SURVIVING TEA CLIPPER

Take in spectacular views from the Main Deck







TOP LEFT
Sue walking through Lesnes Abbey Woods

View of the Thames Barrier from a Thames Clipper

ABOVE
The Queen's House colonnade, Greenwich

ABOVE CENTRE
The Monks' Garden, Lesnes Abbey

steep flight of steps towards Rose Cottage where we bought freshly laid quail eggs.

A little further on we came to Jackwood House Garden. In 2024, the Friends of Oxleas Woodlands converted the area into a wildlife-friendly garden able to withstand changing climatic conditions.

FIND OUT MORE

- ● Severndroog Castle and Tea Room
W severndroogcastle.org.uk
- ● Lesnes Abbey Woods
W lesnesabbeywoods.org
- ● Oxleas Woodlands, including self-guided walks to download
W oxleaswoodlands.uk
- ● A guide to Greenwich
W visitgreenwich.org.uk
- ● The Queen's House, Greenwich
W rmg.co.uk/queens-house
- ● The National Maritime Museum and its permanent exhibitions
W rmg.co.uk/national-maritime-museum

Swathes of cow parsley provided visual interest, not to mention an early source of nectar and pollen for pollinating insects. From this halfway point we doubled back through the middle of the woods, stopping to chat to a dog walker who told us this was one of her favourite places.

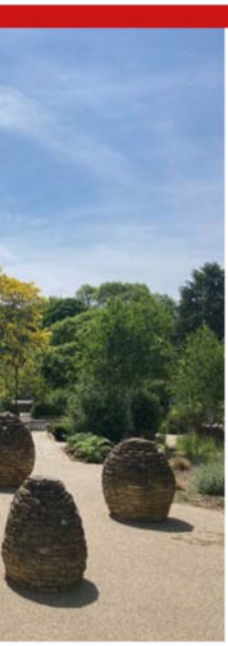
Soon the woods opened up into Castle Wood Meadow. We sat on a fallen tree trunk to admire stately oak trees and, beyond, another fine view over the London skyline. Before clambering back up the stone steps to the castle, we passed a collection of evocatively named roses in the Castle Wood Rose Garden – Lavender Ice, Perfect Harmony, Pink Martini and Nostalgia amongst others.

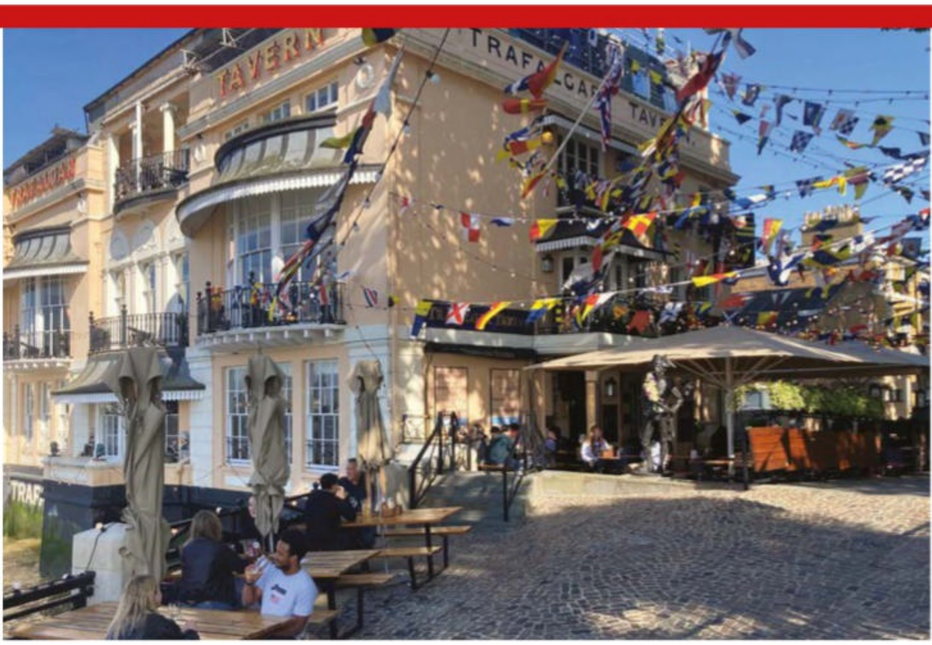
The following morning we decided to visit nearby Greenwich. Taking the train from Abbey Wood station (a 10-minute walk from the site) we got off at Maze Hill station, on the edge of Greenwich Park. First off, we headed along Park Vista towards the Queen's House. According to our tour guide, the Queen's House is considered to be the most beautiful house on the Greenwich Estate. However, it's a hidden gem often overlooked by tourists, partly due to an unremarkable entrance.

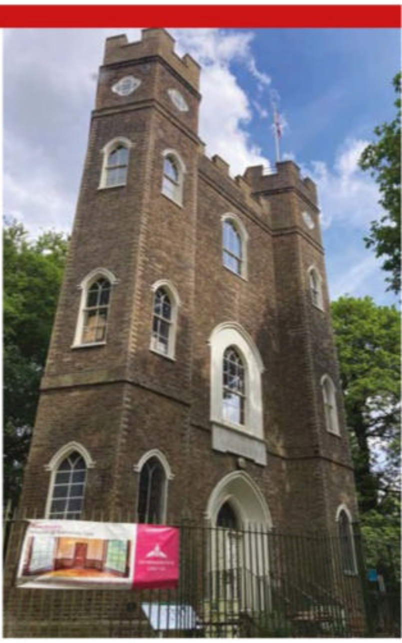
The Queen's House was the first classical villa to be built in England and boasts various other 'firsts'. It has the first geometric black-and-white marble floor, the first self-supporting spiral staircase... the list goes on.

When it was completed in the 1630s, this property was at the cutting edge of architecture and design. Now, it's hard to imagine quite how radical it would have seemed at the time. For those who

BELOW
The *Cutty Sark* and the domed entrance to the Greenwich Foot Tunnel







ABOVE
The Trafalgar Tavern, Greenwich

TOP RIGHT
Severndroog Castle and Tea Room (the 'castle in the woods')

RIGHT
Viewing terrace at Lesnes Abbey

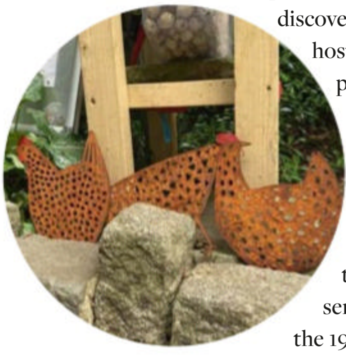
had the cash to follow royal style, it set a trend for white stone, symmetrical design, large windows and marble floors, transforming British architecture.

Queen Anne of Denmark, wife of King James I, commissioned the design of the property. She was a keen patron of the arts and today the Queen's House is home to a remarkable collection of paintings. The beautifully detailed 'Armada Portrait' of Queen Elizabeth I commemorates the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

Our tour was timed so that, at 1pm precisely, we could look through a first-floor window, across Greenwich Park, to watch the bright red ball on top of the Royal Observatory drop to the bottom of its mast. The Time Ball was first used in 1833, and it's one of the world's first time signals, signalling the time to ships on the Thames and Londoners.

From the Queen's House it was just a short stroll to the National Maritime Museum. Stopping en route for lunch at the Parkside Café we ate sandwiches on its terrace, with an excellent view of the Royal Observatory at the top of the park.

The handsome buildings that house the National Maritime Museum were once used as a school for the children of seafarers. These days the museum tells stories of Britain's relationship with the sea. Following our visit to Severndroog Castle the previous day, we were delighted to discover that the museum was hosting an exhibition about pirates (fictional and real-life). We discussed which pirate we'd be. Paul identified with Captain Pugwash, a cheerful moustached buccaneer who sailed the seas in his ship, the *Black Pig*, in a cartoon series aired by the BBC during the 1950s and 60s.



BELOW
Freshly laid quail eggs for sale outside Rose Cottage

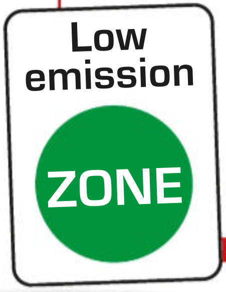
You can't go to Greenwich without visiting the *Cutty Sark*, the world's oldest surviving tea clipper. During the nineteenth century clippers would compete with each other to see who could get the first crop of fresh tea from China to the UK, and the *Cutty Sark* was the fastest of its time.

Modern-day Thames Clippers stop at 24 piers along the river between Putney Pier in west London and Barking Riverside Pier to the east – including Greenwich Pier, adjacent to the *Cutty Sark*. With spare time before our trip back, we strolled along the Thames Path to the Trafalgar Tavern, where we continued our nautical theme with a bottle of Ghost Ship alcohol-free beer.

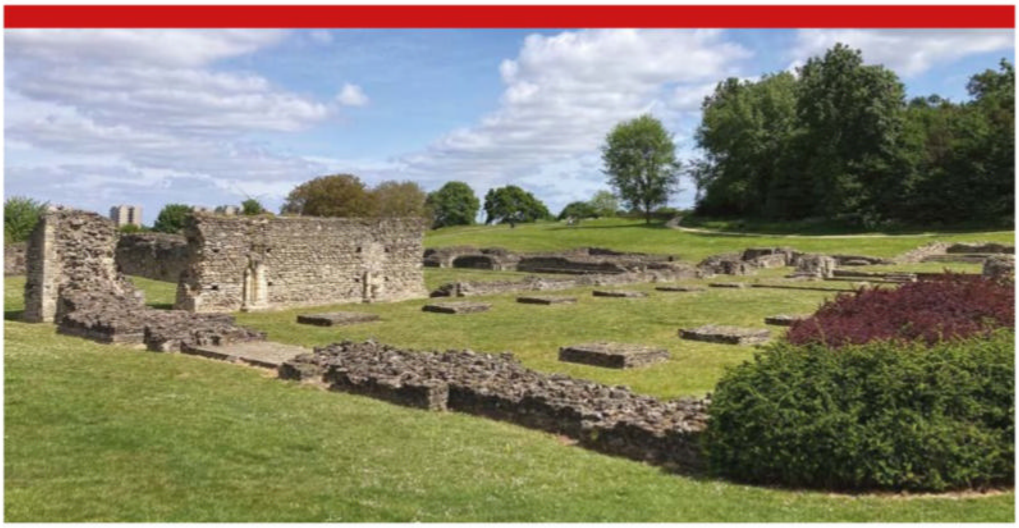
Thames Clipper boats travel at a top speed of 32 knots (approximately 37mph). So we whizzed back along the Thames – past the Millennium Dome, under the Cloud Cable Cars conveying passengers far above the river from one bank to the other, and through the huge steel structures of the Thames Barrier.

On our final morning we were keen to explore Lesnes Abbey Woods. These woods are named after Lesnes Abbey, founded by Richard de Luci in 1178, probably as penance for his role in the murder of Thomas Becket,

✓ TOP TIP



The Caravan and Motorhome Club Abbey Wood campsite is in the London Low Emission Zone. Don't forget to check if your vehicle meets applicable emissions standards, or if you need to pay to enter.



ABOVE
The ruins of Lesnes Abbey

BELOW
A view towards the London skyline from the Thames, Greenwich

Archbishop of Canterbury. We parked on Hurst Lane (a few minutes' drive from the campsite) and downloaded the Lesnes Abbey Wood app. This includes an interactive map so it's easy to follow the recommended routes.

We followed a footpath from Hurst Lane up towards an owl sculpture, one of six tree carvings created by Tom Harvey (or Carver Harvey, as he's known) using a chainsaw and chisel. Turning right, we circled Pine Pond, which originally formed part of the ornamental garden of a Victorian mansion. The house is long gone, as are almost all of the original Scots pines. As we made our way through woods carpeted with indigo-violet bluebells, towards the ruins of the abbey, we passed another of Carver Harvey's atmospheric carvings, the *Lady of the Woods*.

Exiting the woods, we strolled through the Monks' Garden, where low yew hedges encircle flowering plants, including scented lavender, white irises, and the yellow-green spires of euphorbia wulfenii. Nearby, an ancient gnarled mulberry tree. King James I, whose wife commissioned the Queen's House in Greenwich, encouraged the planting of mulberry trees.

Unfortunately, his plans for a silkworm breeding industry failed to take off, in large part due to a lack of botanical knowledge on the part of the king and his advisors. They planted black mulberry trees, which produce fruit, rather than the white mulberry tree, whose leaves are a food source for silkworms.

Past and present meet here with the ruins of Lesnes Abbey in the foreground and, behind, the Brutalist concrete tower blocks of the Thamesmead development. A viewing terrace directs the gaze towards the London skyline further west. Helpfully, nearby signage identifies some of the iconic buildings: The Shard, The Gherkin and The Cheesegrater.

Turning back into the woods, we passed a sculpture of a coryphodon (another Carver Harvey creation). These creatures lived in this area around 50 million years ago, and are one of 47 different mammals whose fossilised remains have been found here, along with shells and fragments of sea life (the entire area was once underwater). Behind the sculpture a class of primary school children, in bright yellow hi-vis jackets, were busy digging in a small, sandy fossil pit.

Our final destination was the Oxleas Wood Café, perched at the top of a steep hillside with impressive views. Clearly there was plenty more to explore in this unexpected green sanctuary in the urban sprawl of southeast London, and we vowed to return to continue our explorations.

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Words Claire Tupholme

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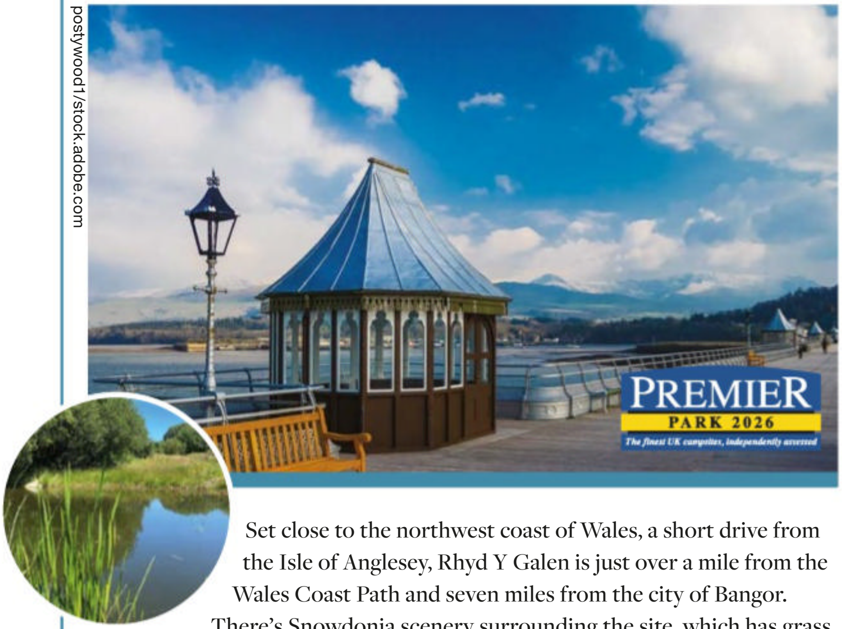

postywood1/stock.adobe.com

Set close to the northwest coast of Wales, a short drive from the Isle of Anglesey, Rhyd Y Galen is just over a mile from the Wales Coast Path and seven miles from the city of Bangor.

There's Snowdonia scenery surrounding the site, which has grass and hardstanding pitches with electric hook-up, plus service pitches with water and drainage. There are toilets and showers, accessible facilities, a motorhome waste point and dog walking area.

Locally, the Menai Bridge to Anglesey is only 10 minutes' drive – at the time it was completed it was the largest suspension bridge in the world. There is a local bus service at the campsite entrance, giving access to Bangor in under an hour. The coastal city is small but bustling, and has a former bishop's palace that is now a museum and gallery, plus a Grade II listed pier, the second-longest in Wales.

Pixabay

LANGDALE LAKES

Station Road, Langworth, Lincoln, Lincolnshire
LN3 5BB
T 01522 752414
W langdalelakes.co.uk
OPEN 1 March – 30 November

Conveniently located just off the A158, six miles from Lincoln, Langdale Lakes is an adults-only tranquil oasis, with two fishing lakes. The touring area has pitches with 16A hook-up, with some pitches right next to the water. All pitches are only a few steps from the lakes, though. Site facilities include toilets, showers and a dishwashing area. There is a bus stop back at the main road near the site entrance and a garden centre and coffee shop is just over a mile away, with a footpath adjacent to the main road the whole way.

The centre of historic Lincoln bustles with shops, museums, galleries, a castle and of course a cathedral. Visit in the warmth of summer and enjoy drinks alfresco while marvelling at the stunning architecture. Brayford Pool is a waterfront area where you can enjoy walks alongside the water and choose from a selection of stylish restaurants.

LEE VALLEY CAMPING & CARAVAN PARK

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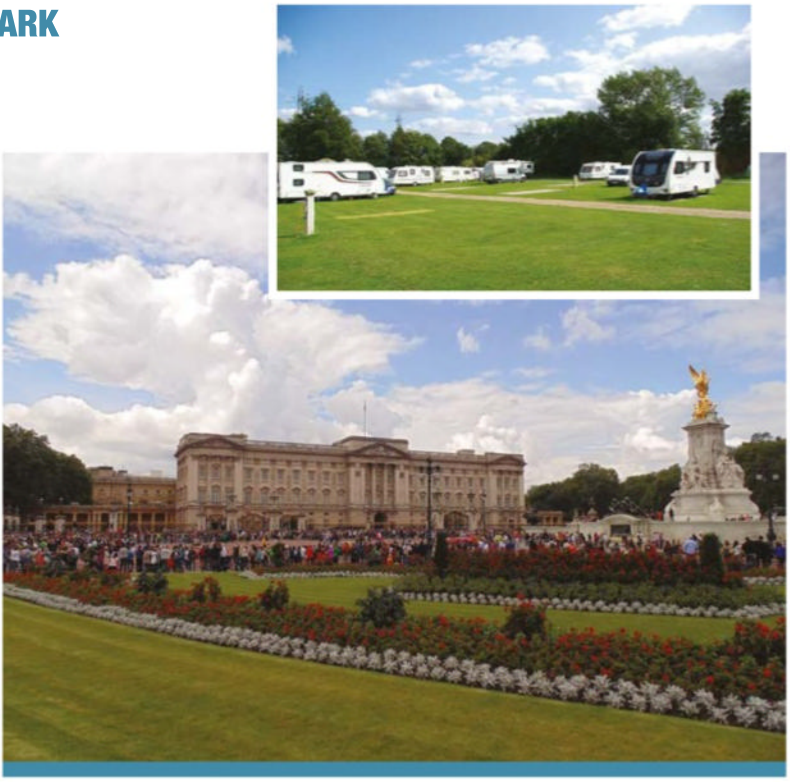
As the UK's capital city, London has something for everyone, come rain or shine. If you want to experience the bright lights of London via a quick trip on public transport, but be far enough out of the city to escape the hustle and bustle at the end of a busy day exploring, then the Lee Valley campsite at Edmonton is the perfect choice.

Located in north London, next to a reservoir and golf course, Lee Valley Camping and Caravan Park has grass and hardstanding pitches with electric hook-up. There's a bus stop outside the site and a train station a short walk away. Also on site are a shop, laundry room, toilets and showers, an 18-hole golf course (clubs available to hire from reception), an Odeon cinema and Lee Valley Athletics Centre. Bikes and fire pits can be hired from reception and nearby there are pubs, restaurants and local shops. Lee Valley is within the Low Emission Zone, so check your vehicle complies before planning a trip **tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/check-your-vehicle/**



Adam Gorka/Pixabay

HARROGATE CARAVAN PARK

Great Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG2 8NZ
T 01423 546145 **W** harrogatecaravanpark.co.uk **OPEN** 28 February – 31 October (weekends in November)

Public Domain Images/Pixabay

Located just two miles from Harrogate town centre, and with a bus stop five minutes' walk away, this campsite is in an ideal location for exploring the pretty spa town. Harrogate's delights include a selection of independent shops and antiques centres, scenic gardens and a theatre. As a spa town there is a Royal Pump Room Museum to explore and Victorian Turkish Baths to enjoy, and a trip to the famous Bettys Café Tea Rooms is also a must!

Harrogate Caravan Park has a mixture of grass and hardstanding pitches with electric hook-up. Facilities include toilets and showers, a laundry room and dishwashing area. The site is owned by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society, a charity championing local agriculture, with profits from the site going back into Yorkshire's farming, food and countryside. Also on site is Fodder, an award-winning farm shop and café.

David Lloyd/Pixabay

CAERFAI BAY CARAVAN & TENT PARK

St Davids, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA62 6QT
T 01437 720274 **W** caerfaibay.co.uk **OPEN** 28 March – 2 November

As the smallest city in the UK, you'd be forgiven for thinking there's not much at St Davids to keep you occupied. However, there's a stunning cathedral, a bishop's palace, craft and gift shops and a choice of cafés. You can even book a boat trip out to explore the range of birdlife on Ramsey Island.

Caerfai Bay Caravan and Tent Park is less than a mile from St Davids, so you can easily stroll from the site to explore the city. For those who would like to walk a little further, the Pembrokeshire Coastal Path passes the site's entrance. You can also access the beach from the park via a concrete path and steps.

Campervans can choose from grass or hardstanding pitches with electric hook-up. There are toilets and showers, family rooms, accessible facilities and a laundry room. Dogs are welcome on site and are accepted on Caerfai beach all year round.

HALDON FOREST HOLIDAY PARK

Clapham, Exeter, Devon EX6 7YG
T 01392 832312
W devoncaravanpark.co.uk
OPEN 28 March – 20 September

Set among mature trees and landscaped ponds, this campsite offers electric grass pitches with three toilet and shower blocks, laundry facilities and a café/bar in high season. The perfect blend of being close to the city, yet in the countryside, Haldon Forest Holiday Park is just five miles from Exeter and under two miles from Haldon Forest. The forest park offers walking and cycling routes through 3,500-acres of woodland and when you fancy a day in the vibrant city of Exeter, Matford Park and Ride, with no height barrier, is only a 10-minute drive away.

Historic Exeter offers plenty to see, including a 600-year-old cathedral, ancient city walls and a medieval guildhall with ornate exterior. You can also head to the quayside to browse the independent shops, walk and cycle by the waterside, or enjoy some al fresco dining. Should you get a rainy day there's also the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, which details the city's 2,000-year history.

caz_che/stock.adobe.com

DRUMMOHR CAMPING & GLAMPING SITE

Levenhall, Musselburgh, Edinburgh EH21 8JS
T 0131 665 6867 **W** drummohr.co.uk **OPEN** All year

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Peggychoucair/Pixabay

From Drummohr you can enjoy the hustle and bustle of Scotland's hilly capital, before retreating back to your peaceful pitch in the grounds of an old monastery. The spacious, hardstanding pitches all have electric hook-up and dogs are welcome. Locally, Drummohr is a 15-minute walk from the coast, and two different golf courses.

Leaving your campervan on site to explore Edinburgh is easy as can be – a bus stop, train station and park and ride service are all less than a mile away. Edinburgh has more to see than you can fit in one day. Like much of the old town, the castle is over 900 years old. The Royal Mile is a vibrant street full of shops, pubs and restaurants, concluding at the Palace of Holyroodhouse.

At the National Museum of Scotland, you can enjoy an in-depth delve into the history of the country, including science, and technology.

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STRAWBERRY HILL FARM CAMPING & CARAVAN PARK

Running Waters, Old Cassop, Durham, County Durham DH6 4QA
T 0191 372 3457 **W** strawberry-hill-farm.co.uk **OPEN** 1 March – 3 January

jimsumo999/Pixabay

Noted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1986, Durham Castle and Cathedral stand proud over the city, in their scenic peninsula location, edged by the River Wear. In the compact, historic city of Durham you can explore winding cobbled streets filled with cafés, galleries, museums and independent shops, and walk along the riverside or take a river cruise.

Just a 20-minute bus journey from the city is Strawberry Hill Farm. A bus stop is a five-minute walk from the site, or campervans are welcome at both Howlands and Sniperley park and ride locations.

The campsite has grass and hardstanding pitches with 16A hook-up. There are toilets and showers, an accessible bathroom and a laundry room. Other amenities include a shop, a play area, a dog walking area, and a tea room serving breakfasts, afternoon tea and home-made cakes.

OAKWOOD FARM TOURING PARK

Oakwood Farm, Parkgate Road, Chester, Cheshire CH1 6EY
T 01244 880828
W oakwoodfarmchester.co.uk
OPEN All year

Oakwood Farm Touring Park is set on the edge of the Wirral Peninsula, three miles from Chester city centre. The site has hardstanding pitches with electric hook-up and water, and there is a toilet and shower block, a laundry room, plus an on-site café. Oakwood Farm is conveniently located on a bus route to Chester and adjacent to a cycle route. If you also fancy visiting another local city, Liverpool is just over an hour on the train from Chester.

Chester has a 1,000-year-old cathedral, the oldest and most complete historical city walls, the oldest racecourse and the largest Roman amphitheatre in Britain. Redeveloped and reopened in late 2022, Chester Market offers a selection of traders selling clothes, gifts, produce and plants, and there is also a choice of global food stalls, with over 400 seats to sit and enjoy some tasty treats.

Paul/Pixabay

Takashi/Shutterstock

SALISBURY CAMPSITE AT BAKE FARM

Bake Farm, Coombe Bissett, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 4JT
T 07973 601727 **W** salisburycampsite.co.uk **OPEN** 8 April – 30 October

Salisbury is home to the second-highest cathedral in Europe, where there's one of the original copies of Magna Carta. In the city you can enjoy a selection of timbered buildings, museums, shops, cafés and restaurants. There's also a train station should you wish to explore another nearby city, Winchester. There is also a park and ride service at Britford where larger vehicles are allowed to park in the coach bays.

Bake Farm offers back-to-basics camping in the countryside but very close to the city (you can walk to Salisbury in less than an hour). There are grass pitches set around the perimeter of a field, with water points, unisex facilities, a washing-up area and waste disposal point. Dogs are welcome and there are lots of walks direct from the site along with plenty of cycling options.

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SCAN ME

WE CHERISH THE BEAUTY OF THE CHESHIRE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE PROXIMITY TO THE CLWYDIAN HILLS

Manor Wood Country Caravan Park is a tranquil retreat nestled in the heart of Cheshire's countryside. Owned and operated by Angela and Nigel Dutton, this family-run park offers a peaceful haven for campers. With 10 acres of well-maintained grounds, the site provides a variety of pitches, including fully serviced pitches, hardstandings and camping options, all set amid scenic views of the Clwydian Hills and the surrounding farmland.
We spoke to the owners to find out more about the site...

How long have you been running your campsite?
We have been managing Manor Wood Country Caravan Park since 2003, bringing our vision of a welcoming and well-maintained campsite to life.

Tell us a little about your site and how it first began
The park began as a small family project, aiming to offer a peaceful camping experience amidst nature. Over the years, we've expanded and enhanced the facilities, always prioritising the comfort and satisfaction of our guests.

What did you do before becoming the owners of this site?
Prior to running the park, we were involved in various roles that honed our skills in hospitality and customer service, providing a solid foundation for our current venture.

What made you want to

MANOR WOOD
COUNTRY CARAVAN PARK
CHESHIRE

A peaceful, family-run retreat in the heart of the Cheshire countryside

own and run a campsite?

Our love for the outdoors and desire to create a space where families and individuals can relax and enjoy nature inspired us to take the leap into campsite ownership.

What do you like most about being a campsite owner?

The most rewarding aspect is seeing our guests return year after year, enjoying the improvements we've made and the peaceful environment we've cultivated.

What are the challenges?

Managing a campsite comes with its challenges, such as maintaining facilities, accommodating varying weather conditions, and ensuring guest satisfaction. However, the positive feedback and repeat visits make it all worthwhile.

What is a typical day like for you?

A typical day involves overseeing park operations, assisting guests with their needs, ensuring cleanliness and maintenance of facilities, and continuously looking for ways to improve the guest experience.

What makes your site special to the guests who return every year?

Our commitment to maintaining a peaceful, clean, and welcoming environment, combined with our personal touch and attention to detail, makes Manor Wood a special place for our guests.

What do you love about the region your site is based in?

We cherish the beauty of the Cheshire countryside and the proximity to the Clwydian Hills. Local attractions like historic Chester and the scenic walking routes of North Wales offer guests a variety of activities to enjoy.

What do you like to do on a rare day off?

On our rare days off, we enjoy exploring the local area, or simply relaxing.

Information

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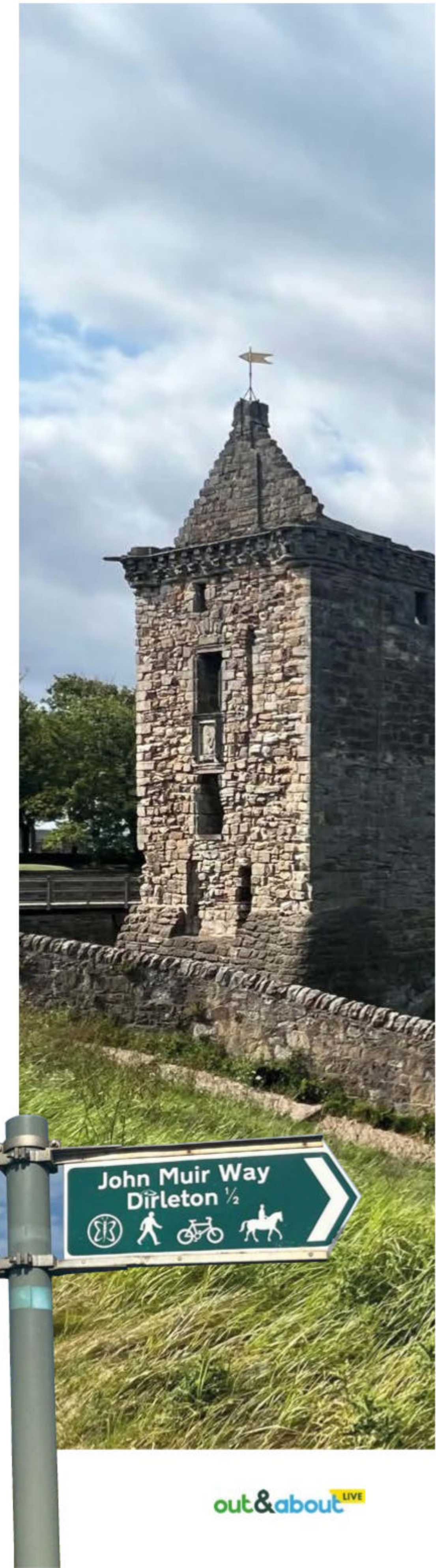
MANOR WOOD COUNTRY CARAVAN PARK
Coddington, Chester, Cheshire CH3 9EN
T 01829 782990
W manor-wood.com

SCOTLAND'S EAST COAST

Words & pictures ▮ **Hazel Hutchinson**

Discovering Yellowcraig



We were finally fulfilling our dream of travelling to Shetland. But first we had to drive our campervan to Aberdeen to catch the overnight ferry. Rather than rushing there and back, we planned to split our journey into manageable sections, to see what interesting places we could find along the east coast of Scotland.

Our first stop was at Yellowcraig, near North Berwick, about twenty miles east of Edinburgh. We approached the campsite along a quiet road which also led to the country park and beach. It was designed to blend in with the surrounding countryside, and it is indeed a lovely site with plenty of grass and trees.

The weather when we arrived was bright and breezy, so we decided to walk to the nearest pub, a mile and a half away, in the village of Dirleton. It was a delightful walk along paths, through woods and fields, following part of the John Muir Way.

I'd never heard of John Muir but discovered that he was born in Dunbar, not far from Yellowcraig. He later travelled to America where he became a famous conservationist, instrumental in preserving areas of wilderness through the creation of national parks. The John Muir Way is a 130-mile coast to coast route from Helensburgh in the west of Scotland to Dunbar in the east.

Throughout our walk I was aware of a steep and isolated hill rising incongruously from the otherwise flat farmland and woodland. It almost reminded me of the Devil's Tower in the film *Close Encounters*! This one, I discovered, was North Berwick Law, a 613-foot volcanic plug. The views from the top must be stunning, but we were happy following a much easier route to the Castle Inn. We sat in the beer garden with Tommy, our Shetland Sheepdog, and enjoyed the sunshine.

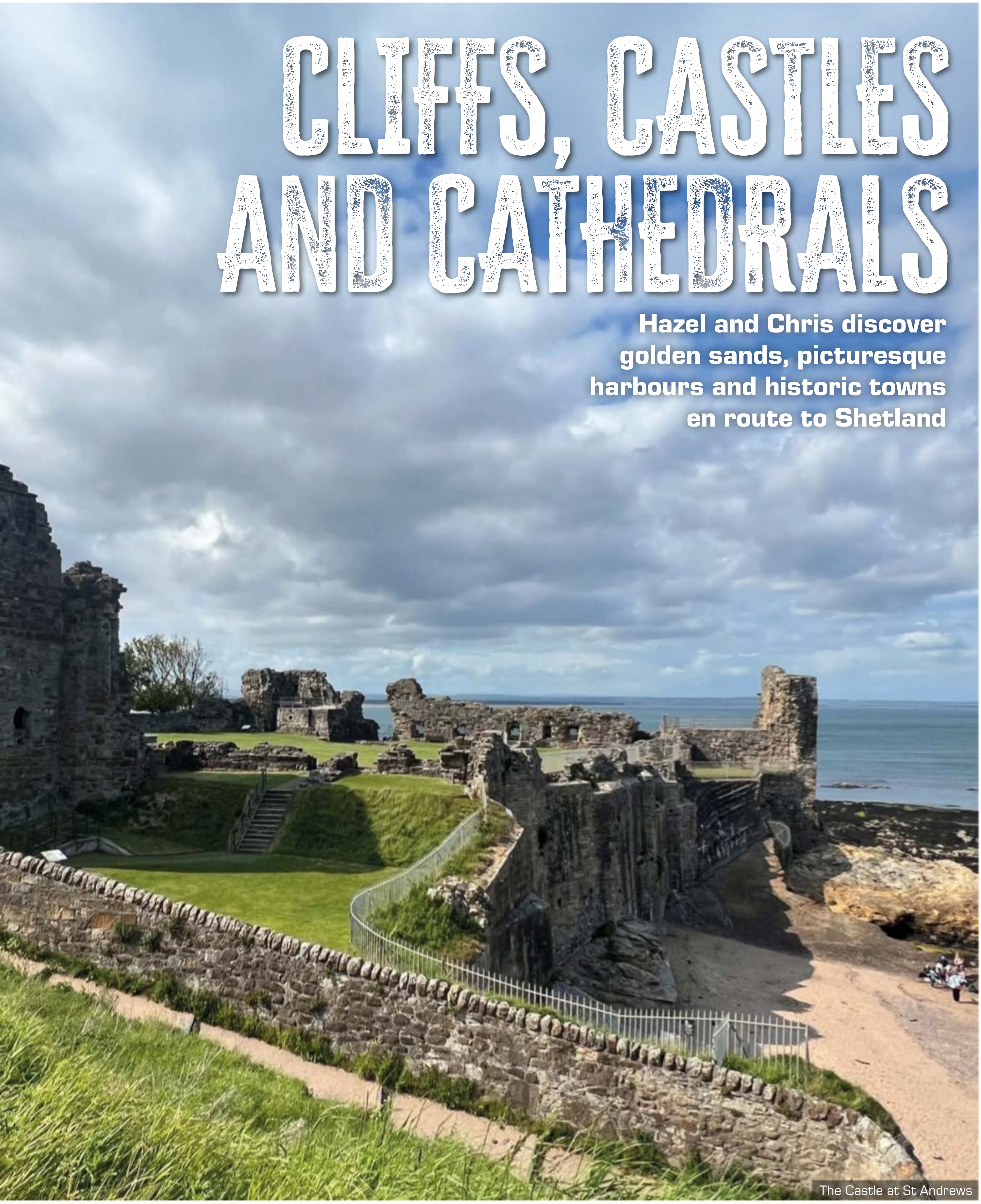
The Marine Hotel

Dirleton is a very attractive village with an extensive green next to the castle and its walled garden.

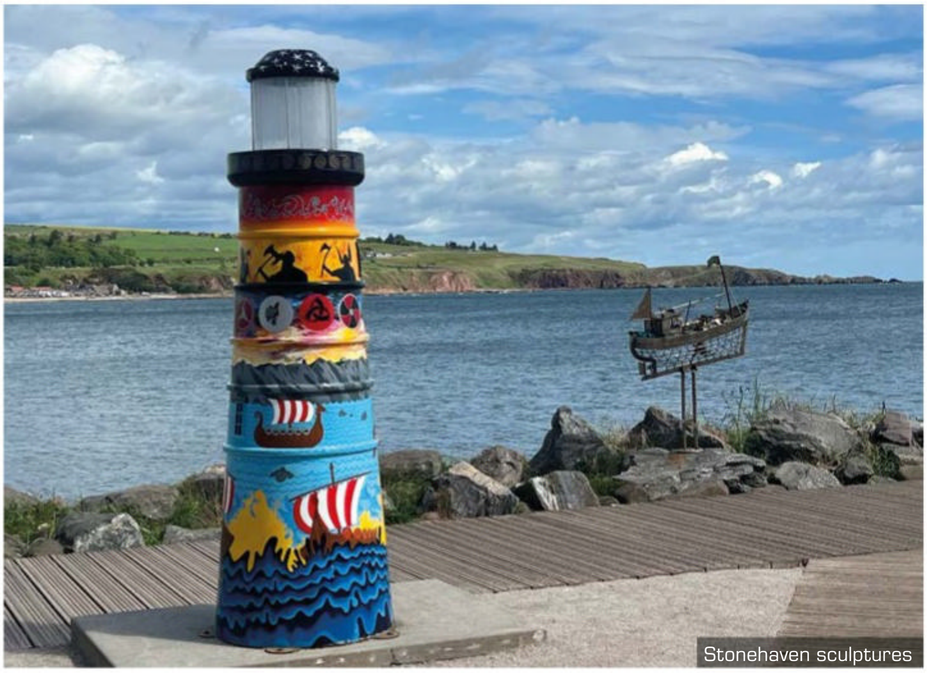
Returning through woodland to the campsite, we continued over sand dunes to the beach, stopping only to buy ice creams. While Tommy is not a dog to carry a stick or ball, he refused to part with his empty carton

CLIFFS, CASTLES AND CATHEDRALS

Hazel and Chris discover golden sands, picturesque harbours and historic towns en route to Shetland



The Castle at St Andrews


Stonehaven sculptures

Berwick from the campsite

Ready to party

once he had devoured its contents.

What a beach! It's a seemingly endless stretch of pale gold sand, framed by sand dunes and Scots pines. As if that's not enough, there's the view of a lighthouse perched on the rugged island of Fidra, with blue mountains in the distance, across the Firth of Forth. The island is said to have been be the inspiration for *Treasure Island*, and it's easy to see why. From this perspective, the surprising volcanic mass of North Berwick Law can be seen to be part of a chain of rocky outcrops.

STAY AT

STONEHAVEN QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK CLUB CAMPSITE
Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire AB39 2RD
W caravanclub.co.uk

YELLOWCRAIG CARAVAN & MOTORHOME CLUB CAMPSITE
Dirleton, East Lothian EH39 5DS
W caravanclub.co.uk

ST ANDREWS HOLIDAY PARK
Kinkell Braes, St Andrews KY16 8PX
W abbeyford.com/locations/st-andrews-holiday-park

BERWICK SEAVIEW CLUB CAMPSITE
Billendean Road, Spittal, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 1QU
W caravanclub.co.uk

The wind increased during the night, but we just had to revisit the beach before continuing our journey. Our next stop was Stonehaven, a few miles south of Aberdeen.

My first impression of Stonehaven was that its name made perfect sense, as the beach was piled high with pebbles, overflowing the wall and spilling onto the promenade. This was clearly a popular place for campervans and motorhomes to park up, but we had booked into another C&MC site, a stone's throw from the beach, and next door to an open-air swimming pool.

Given the cool wind and the fact that we had a dog with us, we decided to give swimming a miss and to head to the harbour. As we walked along the boardwalk, we passed stunning steel sculptures, including a lighthouse, a fishing boat, a Viking longship, a biplane, dolphins and a lobster.

While Chris battled the wind as he attempted to fish from the pier, I enjoyed a coffee outside the Marine Hotel and explored the harbour area. I was intrigued to discover a wood-fired sauna and a beach hut with fire pit that could be rented out for parties or as office space. Perfect for anyone not lucky enough to own a campervan!

Returning to our 'van, we visited the foreshore at Cowie, an old fishing village just north of Stonehaven and close to the campsite. I'm no expert on geology but I was fascinated to read how it was situated at the end of the massive Highland Boundary Fault that cuts across Scotland. I even used the QR code on the information board so that I could watch a video on the subject.

Cowie's other claim to fame was the discovery of fossilised remains of the oldest known air-breathing land animal in the world, Pneumodesmus newmani. How disappointing for me to discover it was nothing more exciting than a tiny millipede.

A coble in the Tweed estuary

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The Castle Inn at Dirleton

While I was educating myself, Chris was busy collecting limpets from the rocks for another attempt at fishing. Before catching our overnight ferry to Shetland, we bought fish and chips from the excellent Bay Fish Shop and took them back to our 'van to enjoy sheltered from the wind.

The story of our trip to Shetland is a tale for another day. Suffice it say that a week later we were back in Aberdeen and heading for our next campsite on the mainland.

The ferry had docked at seven in the morning, and we had a clear run through to St Andrews. The only flaw in our journey was that we chose the wrong lane when approaching the Tay Bridge, inadvertently entering Dundee's Low Emission Zone in our elderly diesel 'van. Fortunately, we were blithely unaware of the consequences of our error at the time it happened.

When we reached the holiday park at St Andrews it was too early to pitch up, so we visited the dog-friendly on-site restaurant for a coffee to revive us. After looking at the menu, we decided that a full Scottish breakfast would revive us even more. We went for the whole hog: sausage, bacon, black pudding, haggis, eggs, baked beans, tomato and a tattie scone. We wouldn't need to eat again for a while. Through the window we had a glimpse of the sea and the sweep of St Andrews Bay.

Chris is happy to find a micropub

Our pitch on the Clifftops touring field, once ready, was perfectly situated. Next to it was a strip of wildflower meadow, beyond that a line of trees to provide a windbreak, and then the clifftop path. We turned right first to follow the cliffs as far as a path that wound down to a secluded cove, passing a golf course on our way. This was St Andrews after all! I think Chris was wishing he'd brought golf clubs instead of fishing tackle. I just hope that he never tries to fit both into the 'van.

Then we headed to the town itself. There was a wide golden beach where Tommy enjoyed a good run, and beyond that the headland with its castle and cathedral. The cathedral was the largest church ever to have been built in Scotland and its size is still impressive despite being in ruins.

And while I knew that St Andrews has a famous university, I didn't know that it was the third oldest in the UK (after Oxford and Cambridge). Many of the fine buildings that we passed were clearly university buildings.

After looking at the cathedral ruins, we headed for the pleasant tree-lined South Street that runs through the centre of the town. The wind had dropped a little and the sun was shining so we sat outside the welcoming Criterion Inn and watched the

North Berwick Law

Dolphin sculpture

world go by.

On our way back we had a closer look at the castle and read a rather bloodthirsty account of how the first Protestant church in Scotland came into being. The story included a heretic being burnt at the stake and a cardinal being hung from the battlements. In contrast to those gruesome events, the castle now overlooks a peaceful scene. Tommy enjoyed another run on the almost deserted beach. It still wasn't barbecuing weather but that didn't stop us enjoying from the 'van a spectacular sunset over St Andrews.

Our final overnight stop was just over the border, at Berwick-upon-Tweed, the most northerly town in England but one that has often been part of Scotland. The campsite gave us excellent views over the market town with its Elizabethan ramparts and its clock tower soaring skywards.

We walked into the town across the Old Bridge which dates to the seventeenth century. With more than 15 spans it had cost £15,000 to build, a colossal sum for those times. It was interesting to compare it to another highly expensive and impressive feat of engineering: the Queensferry Crossing over the Firth of Forth, which we had travelled across earlier.

At the other side of the bridge was an information board explaining how the artist LS Lowry was inspired by street scenes in Berwick. I did my best to match one of his paintings to the view in front of us.

Spittal Beach

Golden sand and Scots pines

The town is dominated by its sandstone town hall and guildhall with its 153-foot spire. While I tried to photograph it, Chris was consulting his list of dog-friendly pubs selling real ale. Finally, he settled down contentedly in the Curfew micropub, tucked away up a tiny alleyway.

As we walked back to the campsite, we noticed a group of men engaged in some kind of activity in the middle of the Tweed estuary. As we watched them at work, we eventually realised that they were fishing by 'net and coble', the only permitted method of commercial fishing for wild salmon and one that uses a 900-year-old technique.

Before leaving Berwick the following morning, we took a last walk along the wild Spittal Beach, just across the road from the campsite. It would be Tommy's last run on a beach before we returned home.

A STUNNING SUNSET AT ST ANDREWS

FOU FIGHTERS

Gerald Vilenna/ stock.adobe.com

Head through France to discover a historic spectacular

Words & pictures ▮ Chris Elliott

Many campervanners enjoy travelling down through western France, perhaps heading for the Loire Valley or the beaches of the Vendée. They may not know that about an hour's drive from each (and roughly equidistant from the main Channel ports and the Spanish border) is one of France's most popular theme parks. It is visited by over two million people a year, and very well set up for campervans and motorhomes.

It is called Puy du Fou and specialises in spectacular historical recreations with stunning visual effects in both indoor and outdoor settings. Most of the shows last about 30-40 minutes and are staggered through the day so that you can plan which ones you want to enjoy.

To give you an idea of what you will see, without spoiling your visit, I will explain a bit more about one of the shows. You have taken your seat in an 8,000-capacity (full size) Roman amphitheatre. The Romans have invaded Gaul (northwestern France), but the

Gerald Vilenna/stock.adobe.com

natives are fighting back. Captured Gauls are pitted against expert gladiators in a series of contests and then in a four-horse chariot race around the arena. The centre of the arena then converts into a Roman galleon where more spectacular action takes place with impressive pyrotechnics before the show reaches its conclusion.

Other main shows include the Vikings, Knights of the Round Table and The Secrets of the Lance in which Joan of Arc helps repel the English in the 100 Years War. I must make a special mention of the Bird Show which is unlike any falconry exhibition I have ever seen. In its conclusion over 200 birds are flying around the arena, some released from a balloon high overhead, before a flock of geese fly in formation following a microlight above the arena. You have to see it to believe it!

You don't need to book to park and stay in your motorhome. There is a large, dedicated area for motorhome parking, which accommodates hundreds of units. It has water and waste disposal facilities and a toilet block (no showers). There are also a limited number of electric hook-ups. The pitches are grass, served by a hard-surfaced road, but quite a lot have a slight slope and so ramps may be required. There is a cabin which sells baguettes and croissants.

Some of the units park very close together, often for access to the limited electric points, but we managed to maintain a more British spacing. It is about a 15-minute walk to the theme park entrance from the motorhome parking area. There is a shuttle bus service which we saw on a number of occasions but we didn't use it.

There are also two evening shows, one called Les Noces de Feu, and a huge spectacular which only takes place on Friday and Saturday nights from June until early September called La Cinéscénie. Despite a 17,000 seating capacity you must book this in advance to see a stage area of 23 hectares, in the grounds of a ruined château, with 2,550 actors and which finishes with an unbelievable firework and laser display.

We were absolutely amazed at the spectacle which this attraction provides and the ease of enjoying it from the comfort of our motorhome.

Puy de Fou is located near Les Epesses which is about 50 miles southeast of Nantes and 65 miles southwest of Saumur. Do pay it a visit for a fantastic couple of days and then maybe, like us, head towards the Vendée coast to relax.

YOU HAVE TO SEE THE PUY DU FOU BIRD SHOW TO BELIEVE IT!

Gerald Vilenna/stock.adobe.com

AN EASY SELL

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Planning a campervan upgrade? Here's the quickest and most profitable way to sell your current 'van

Are you ready to bid farewell to your trusted campervan and considering upgrading to a newer model? Selling a campervan can be a complex process, and knowing the ropes can make all the difference. But don't worry... we've done it all before and in this comprehensive guide we'll walk you through everything you need to know about selling a campervan, from valuable tips and market insights to the best time of year to make your move.

BEFORE YOU SELL

Before you embark on the journey of selling your campervan, it's crucial to be prepared. Research the market to understand current trends and pricing for campervans similar to yours. Clean and inspect your 'van thoroughly, addressing any minor repairs or maintenance issues to maximise its appeal and value. Gather all relevant documentation, including service records and ownership papers, to build trust with potential buyers.

One common concern for sellers is whether campervans hold their value over time. Generally, they do, especially if they are well-maintained and equipped with sought-after features. However, it's essential to be realistic about depreciation, which can vary depending on the make, model, age, and condition of your campervan.

Campervans, like any vehicle, have a finite lifespan. However, with proper care and maintenance, they can last for many years. On average, a well-maintained campervan can provide reliable service for around 20 to 30 years. And with regular servicing, addressing issues promptly and keeping the interior and exterior in good condition, you can extend its life significantly.

START SELLING

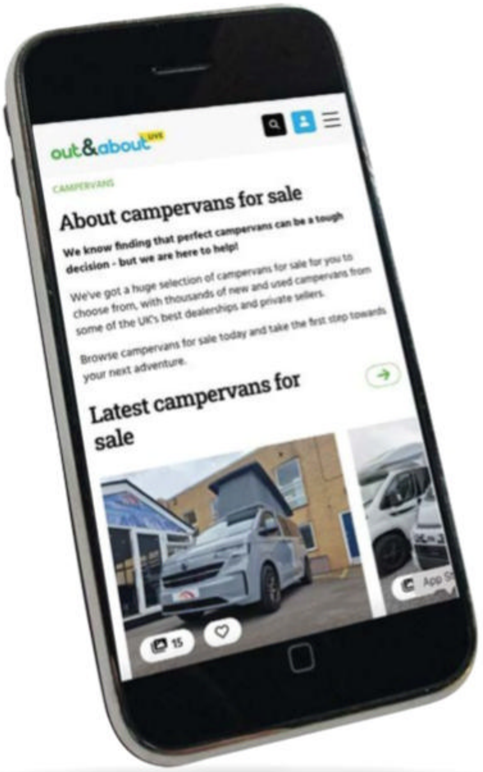
Selling to a dealer vs private sale

Selling your campervan to a dealer can be a convenient option if you prefer a quick and hassle-free process. Dealers may offer a lower price compared to private sales, but they handle all paperwork and can provide an immediate transaction.

Selling your campervan privately may take more effort, but it can potentially yield a higher selling price. Create compelling listings with detailed descriptions and high-quality photos to attract potential buyers. Be prepared to negotiate and to arrange test drives for serious inquiries.

Where to list your campervan for sale

Once you've prepared your campervan for sale and are armed with all the necessary information, it's time to showcase your 'van to potential buyers. Here are some of the top places in the UK where you can list your campervan for sale:



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• Auction websites
If you're open to selling your campervan through an auction, consider using websites like eBay. Online auctions can attract competitive bidding, potentially leading to a higher selling price.

• Online classified websites
Websites like Gumtree are popular platforms for selling vehicles in the UK. These websites have extensive reach and can connect you with potential buyers in your local area and far beyond.

• Campervan forums
Engaging with campervan communities through forums can be an excellent way to find interested buyers. Many members actively look for campervans for sale and may prefer buying from fellow enthusiasts.

• Social media groups
Utilise Facebook groups and other social media platforms dedicated to campervans. Look for groups with a significant number of members interested in buying and selling campervans. Always check the group rules before posting your listing. If you're prepared to take on the time-wasters and scammers, Facebook Marketplace is another option for selling.

• Local newspapers and magazines
Some people still prefer traditional methods of searching for campervans for sale, and local newspapers and magazines with classified sections can be a great way to reach this still sizable audience.

• Word of mouth
Don't underestimate the power of word-of-mouth marketing. Let your friends, family, and acquaintances know that you're selling your campervan. They might know someone interested or spread the word within their own networks.

Remember to be responsive to enquiries, provide honest answers, and maintain a professional demeanour throughout the selling process, regardless of the platform you choose. By selecting the right places to list your campervan, you'll increase your chances of finding the perfect buyer for your cherished

CamperUK
RAPIDO
£57995
AK20 OCY
£72495
CamperUK
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Trackhorse

home on wheels.

Note: Always be cautious when sharing personal information and conducting transactions online. Prioritise safety and consider meeting potential buyers in a public place or bringing along a friend or family member during viewings and test drives.

How to create your listing
When creating your campervan listing, highlight its unique features, recent upgrades, and any extras included. Use the primary and supporting keywords like "selling a campervan," "sell my campervan," and "campervan sales" in your online listing to improve its visibility.

How long will it take to sell?
The time it takes to sell your campervan can vary based on factors such as demand, pricing, and the condition of your vehicle. While some campervans may find a buyer within a few weeks, others might take a few months. Be patient, and consider adjusting the price or marketing strategy if needed to attract potential buyers.

The timing of your sale can impact its success. The best time to sell a campervan is during the spring and early summer months when outdoor activities are popular, and people are planning their holidays. However, since campervans are in demand year-round, you can still find buyers during other seasons – and winter can be a good time as people look ahead to the summer.

BUYING A REPLACEMENT

After successfully selling your campervan, buying a new one can be an exciting endeavour. Start by setting a budget and identifying your must-have specifications. Research various makes and models that align with your travel needs and preferences. Consider browsing reputable dealerships, online platforms, and attending motorhome shows to explore a wide range of options. Take your time to compare prices, inspect vehicles thoroughly, and if possible, arrange test drives to ensure a perfect match for your next home on wheels.

☑ TOP SELLING TIPS

- Be honest and transparent about your campervan's condition and history
- Consider offering potential buyers a test drive to showcase your campervan's performance
- Respond promptly to enquiries and maintain open communication with potential buyers
- Be prepared to negotiate, but also know your minimum acceptable price
- Stay vigilant against potential scams or fraudulent buyers and verify payment methods securely

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A FRESH APPROACH TO VANLIFE

For campsite convenience and wild camping freedom, separation toilets make road trips a whole lot easier

THETFORD
Separation Toilet
Bowl Cleaner
THETFORD
Separation Toilet
Urine Tank Fresh

If you've ever woken up in a remote forest clearing and thought, "This is the life"– only for your chemical toilet to remind you otherwise – you're not alone.

For many campervanners, especially those who spend serious time off-grid, the weakest link in the set up isn't the water tank, the battery or even the fridge. It's the loo. But a quiet revolution is taking place in the smallest room of your 'van: the separation toilet.

INFORMATION

THETFORD SEPARATION TOILET AND CONVERSION KIT

S220-S – Manual level indicator (£723 RRP)
S260-S – Electric level indicator (£757 RRP)
SK220 and SK260 – Conversion Kits for C220 and C260 cassette toilets (£509 RRP)

FEATURES

- Dual 7.5-litre tanks for solids and liquids
- Made from recycled plastics
- Optional vent kit for extra airflow
- No flush water required, nature based additives for optional use
- Solids collected in compostable liner bags
- Liquids tank includes airtight pipe and level gauge

Once a niche idea championed by full-timers and eco-warriors, the separation toilet has now gone mainstream – so much so that even Thetford, the big name in chemical loos, has joined the movement (pardon the pun). The company's new range of separation toilets (and conversion kits for popular models) aimed at campervans and motorhomes, shows just how far the idea has come. But beyond the tech and the plumbing, there's a deeper question: why would you actually want one?

Well, if you love your independence, don't like unpleasant smells and prefer your wild camping weekends without frantic campsite dashes just to empty the toilet cassette, then read on.

THE FRESH AIR ADVANTAGE

Let's start with the most obvious – and most appreciated – benefit: the lack of smell. Traditional chemical toilets work by mixing liquids and solids together, which kickstarts a delightful chemical reaction that produces ammonia. That's the classic "pong" every vanlifer knows too well. The chemicals you pour in are there to mask it, to liquify the waste and reduce gas build-up.

This is the pipe that shuts off the liquid pipe

A separation toilet takes a simpler, smarter approach. Urine is diverted to a front compartment, while solids drop into a separate container at the back. By keeping moisture and solids apart, you stop that ammonia reaction in its tracks. Covering the solids with something absorbent – like sawdust or coconut fibre – helps dry them out and prevent odours altogether. The result? A surprisingly neutral smelling toilet, even after several days of use.

In other words, you can enjoy your morning coffee without wondering if something's died in the washroom.

Longer off-grid stays

One of the great joys of campervanning is freedom – the ability to park up by a lake, forest or coastal cliff and just be there. But nothing kills that mood faster than having to pack up early because your loo needs emptying.

That's where separation toilets really shine. Because the waste is stored separately and dries out faster, you can go much longer between empties – sometimes up to 10 days, depending on use. No more timing your adventures around dump stations or planning your routes by chemical disposal points.

For long-term travellers, this added autonomy is priceless. It's a real advantage for campervan builds where every litre of storage space counts. Less water used, fewer chemicals stored and fewer bulky cassettes to lug across a campsite – what's not to love?

HOW TO CONVERT

If you are starting a new conversion from scratch, you can choose to have a whole new toilet fitted… either the S220-S or the S260-S, also available as CS models. Thinking of converting your existing Thetford cassette toilet to a separation setup? Good news: it's a relatively straightforward job.

The conversion kits are designed for Thetford's popular C220 and C260 models, and the process is fairly simple. For toilets plumbed into your 'van's existing water supply, you'll just need to pop a bung on to cap it off. There's also a blanking plate to cover where the flush button used to be – and there's no complicated wiring, as most electric flush systems are plug-and-play.

You will need to remove the old cassette hatch retainer and trim a small section of plastic for hygiene reasons. It's easy enough to do, but it does mean you won't be able to revert to a chemical setup later.

Because there's no plumbing or electrics, upkeep is minimal. Still, a bit of TLC goes a long way. Thetford recommends using its nature-based Separation Toilet Urine Tank Fresh after every discharging to prevent scale build-up and unpleasant urine smells, and nature based Separation Toilet Bowl Cleaner occasionally to clean the bowl without using water (just a piece of toilet paper is enough) and without damaging the plastic.

If you spend long stretches off-grid, the optional vent kit is worth considering. It slots neatly into the locker door and helps whisk away any faint odours between empties. Installation is easy—just a small circular cut in the door and you're done.

The optional vent kit ➔

WATER-FREE AND WORRY-FREE

Speaking of water, a separation toilet doesn't need any for flushing. When you're living off a limited water tank, this is a game-changer.

Instead of pouring your precious fresh water into the toilet (only to have to replace it at the next service point), you can use it where it really matters: for cooking, washing and staying hydrated. It also means there's no risk of frozen pipes in winter, no water pumps to maintain and one less thing to go wrong when you're miles from civilisation.

This "dry" system feels surprisingly hygienic too. By eliminating standing liquid and keeping the solids container dry and sealed, there's far less chance for odours to escape. In fact, some users report their separation loo feels cleaner than a cassette ever did.

SIMPLER, CLEANER DISPOSAL

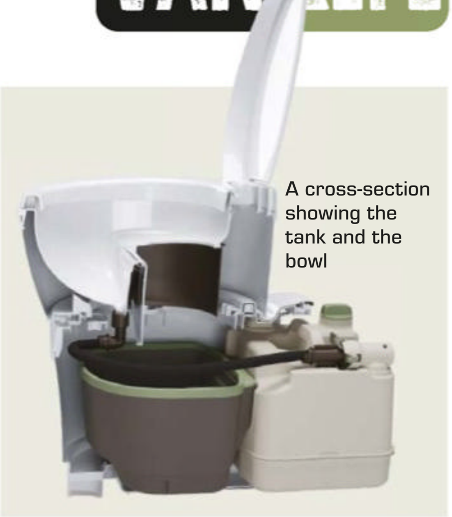
Let's be honest – emptying the toilet is nobody's favourite campervan chore. But separation offers a completely new option.

The solid waste sits neatly in a small recycled plastic bag inside a bucket. When full, you simply tie it up and dispose of it in the same way you'd get rid of nappies – into normal black-bin waste. Thetford says these bags need to be disposed of at stations for non-recyclable waste. And, after consulting both Clubs and other sites groups, we can confirm that bagged solids should be disposed of with normal household waste.

As for the liquid waste, it can be poured down any normal toilet. Because each tank is smaller and lighter, there's no need to lug a heavy, sloshing cassette across the campsite.

THETFORD JOINS THE FRAY

Until recently, separation toilets were the domain of small specialist brands and DIY tinkerers. But Thetford's arrival in this space signals a major shift.



A cross-section showing the tank and the bowl

The company's S220-S and S260-S models bring the concept firmly into the mainstream, with prices starting at £723 – £757. For those not ready to replace their entire loo, Thetford has cleverly designed conversion kits for its best-selling C220 and C260 chemical toilets (£509). That means thousands of existing campervan owners can upgrade without a major refit.

The set up is simple. The urine flows into a sealed front tank with its own level indicator, while solids drop into a lined bucket at the rear. A sprinkle of sawdust and you're done. Both containers are made from recycled plastic and have 7.5-litre capacities – small enough to handle easily, but big enough for several days' use.

There's even an optional vent kit to help remove any lingering odours between empties, and maintenance is minimal, just an occasional clean (Separation Toilet Bowl Cleaner) and descaling of the urine tank (Separation Toilet Urine Tank Fresh).

THE BOTTOM LINE

While separation toilets might sound like a small upgrade, in practice they can transform your campervan experience. Imagine not having to plan your trips around disposal points. Imagine fewer chemicals, less water use and no unpleasant smells creeping into your living space.

They also appeal to the growing number of eco-conscious vanlifers who want to reduce their impact without sacrificing comfort. By cutting chemical use and water consumption, these toilets are genuinely more sustainable – not just in theory, but in day-to-day living.

And, let's face it, there's something deeply satisfying about taking care of life's less glamorous necessities in a simple, efficient way. It's a bit like switching from a noisy generator to solar panels – you wonder why you didn't do it sooner.

OUT AND ABOUT
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THINKING OF BUYING A NEW CAMPERVAN?

If you are planning on buying your first campervan or upgrading your existing model, Out & About Live's Essential Guide to Motorhomes & Campervans 2026 is a must.

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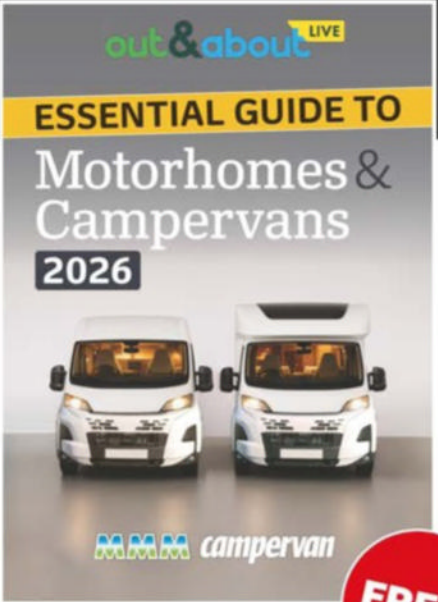
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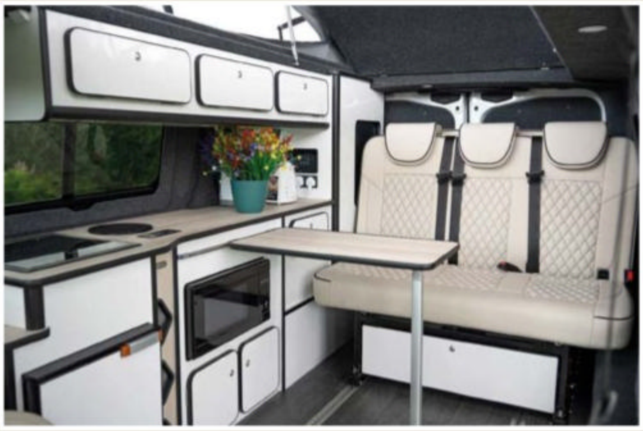
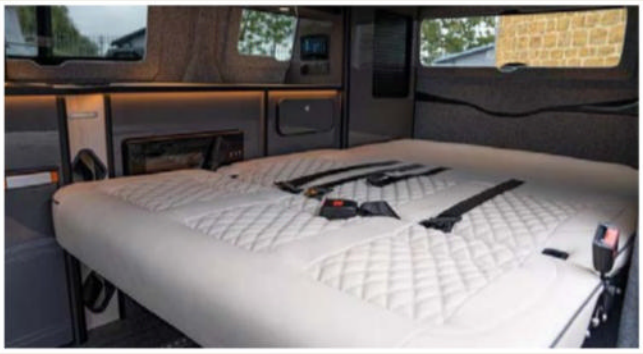
Last month we brought you the highlights of Caravan Salon Dűsseldorf in Germany. This month we put the Motorhome and Caravan Show at the NEC in the spotlight, with 10 of the most exciting new campervans we saw at the show

1 CamperKing T7 Freedom

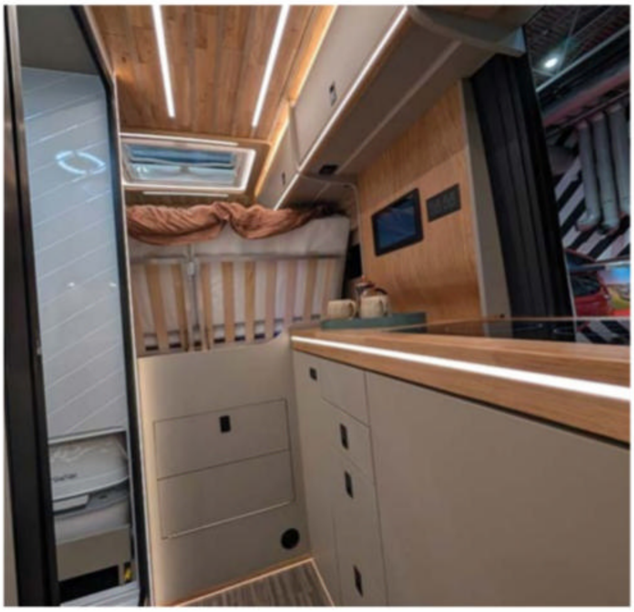
The new Volkswagen T7 has undoubtedly split opinion in the campervan world, but CamperKing reckons the latest version of the iconic Transporter is "sleeker, smarter and more efficient" than its predecessors. The new T7 Freedom is all about off-grid living – and has the option of a massive 1,000Ah lithium battery with two 120W solar panels. You could possibly argue that it's overspecced, but the idea is that it lets you run everything – from your fridge to your induction hob and microwave – without needing a hook-up. A rail bed system is fitted as standard, with three seats in the back and the option of adding a couple of jump seats for even more flexibility.





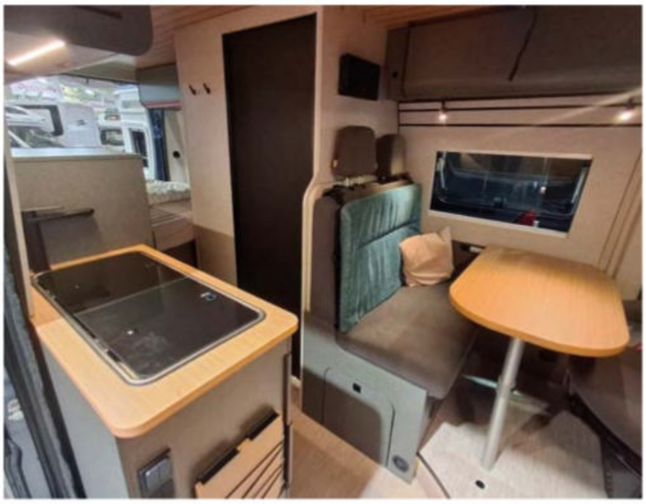
2 Landseer Artemis

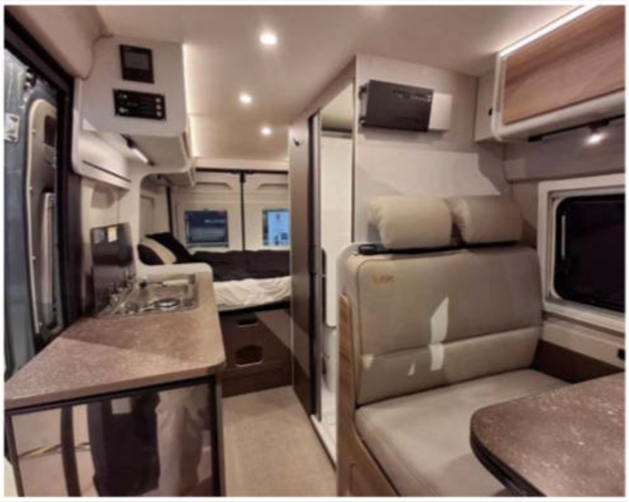
Preston-based Landseer is known for its high-spec Transit Custom pop-tops but it is expanding its line-up for the coming season with a fixed bed conversion on the 6m MAN TGE van. The Artemis looks like it's going to be something special. Among the eye-catching features is a cool sliding cooker/worktop and a rear bed that converts to a sofa where you can take in the view from the open doors. Although the prototype we saw at the show was designed to the specific needs of one customer, the final version won't be much different when it goes into production later in 2026.



3 Hymer Redwood 601

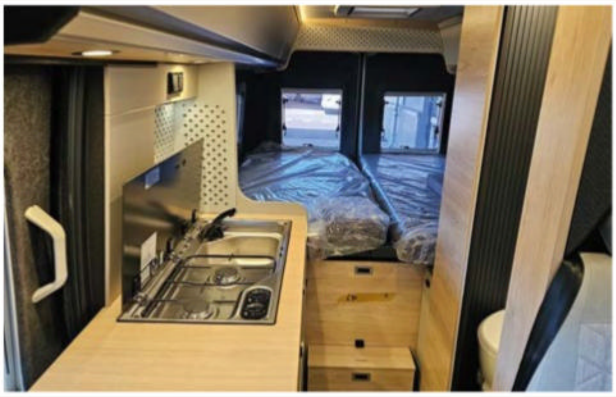
This stylish new Fiat Ducato-based compact campervan is designed for active travellers seeking a blend of comfort, functionality and style on their journeys. The 601 features a clever Vario bathroom with a sliding door for added flexibility. Other highlights include the Smart Connect Unit for app-based control of lighting, climate and security, as well as tasteful interiors with bamboo surfaces and ambient lighting. The models are available in three equipment lines: Sport, Trail and Explorer, catering to different needs.





4 Bürstner B66 600 C

To celebrate Bürstner's 66-year anniversary, comes this special edition range that includes two campervans – and as you might expect the level of standard equipment is high. The spec includes reversing camera, air pressure sensors, 16in bicolour alloys, sliding door flyscreen and more. The 600 C has a traditional fixed transverse double bed layout with a 140hp engine and automatic gearbox.

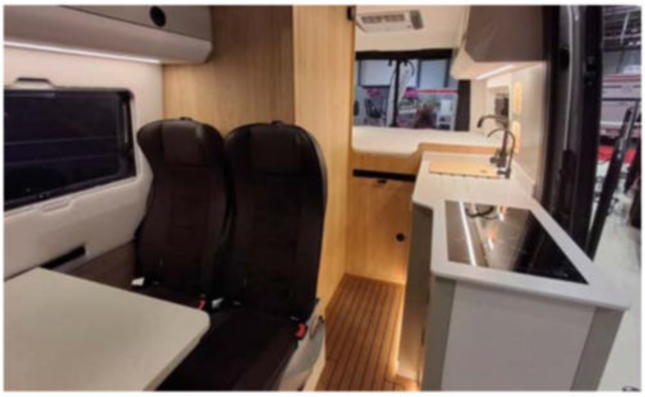


5 Knaus Boxtime

Boxtime is a new range of Ducato-based campervans from Knaus that comes in four layouts, and two big innovations. First is the washroom featuring a swivel wall to create a full-sized shower. The other innovation is the new Light Weight Technology interior moulding system, which Knaus says saves as much as 60kg of weight, as well as offering significant insulation and sound-deadening qualities. Boxtime models have a rear transverse double bed or fixed singles and a front lounge, with multifunctional wall panels that are compatible with kitchen organising accessories.

6 Project Yonder Nomad 4X

When Project Yonder founders, Charlie and Grace, set out to design their latest model they had one aim in mind – to create one of the coolest campervans in the UK. And with the Nomad 4X, a 4x4 based on the 6m Mercedes Sprinter, it's mission accomplished. While some "off-road" campers are unlikely to ever venture anywhere more challenging than a bumpy B road, the Nomad is built for adventure. Externally it's designed to tackle the toughest terrain, while internally it's all about comfort, from the gas-free kitchen unit to the luxury washroom. There's a touchscreen control panel developed in conjunction with Garmin and the electrical system provides 660Ah of lithium battery power for off-grid living. Ideal for that air-con unit.

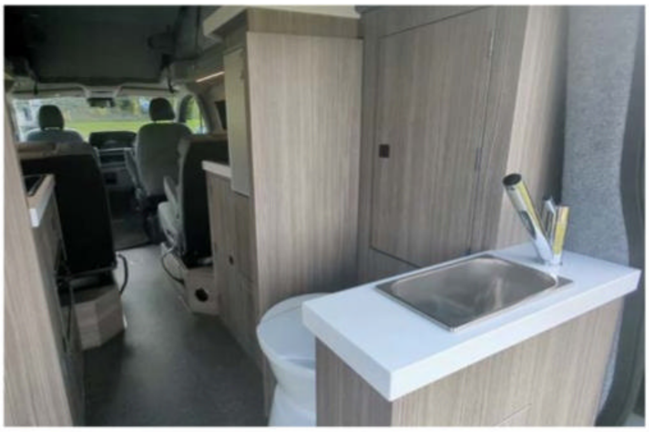


7 Out and About Summit

With its shimmering wrap, the updated version of Out and About's Crafter conversion was one of the most eye-catching campervans at the NEC show. Inside, the design has been given a slight tweak, with a new-look rear washroom and an improved kitchen area, which is well equipped, looks stunning and has loads of space.

8 Hillside Cromford

The side kitchen is by far the most common campervan layout because it just works, but it's always good to see something different. And this, on the new T7, is a great example of a practical alternative design. The Cromford's galley kitchen is at the back along with a fixed toilet and sink, which can be separated off for privacy. At night, the rear RIB seats convert into two single beds or can be joined together to create one double.



9 Sunlight Vanlife

With its pop-up roof, spacious living area, funky graphics and separate cab, this is a campervan that takes its inspiration from the self-conversion and – as its name would suggest – vanlife worlds. A fixed staircase, complete with built-in cupboards and fridge, takes you up to the roof and a large double bed where you can sleep below the stars. Downstairs there's a fully equipped kitchen and washroom, and a comfortable lounge area that converts to another double bed.

10 Wildtracks Explorer T7

The new T7 conversion from Wildtracks comes with the Explorer package which includes premium side furniture, a lithium battery, touchscreen electrics, solar panel, diesel heater and Vanshades blinds. Prices start at £60,500 for a brand-new VW T7.

NEWS

Find out what's going on in the world of campervanning

PREMIER PARKS REVEALS 2026 LINE-UP

PREMIER
PARK 2026

Daisy Bank Caravan Park
Snead, Montgomery, Powys, SY15 6EB

Premier Parks, the high-quality campsite collection, has announced the top sites selected for its 2026 line-up.

Each site in the collection is personally inspected and handpicked by a member of the Premier Parks team. Launched in 2008 by the editorial teams behind *Campervan*, MMM and *Caravan* magazines, the group was created to showcase the finest campsites and touring parks across the UK.

From peaceful, adults-only countryside escapes, to lively family-friendly holiday parks by the sea, Premier Parks offers something for every type of holidaymaker. New additions to the group for 2026 include high-quality parks in Somerset, Cornwall, Norfolk, Yorkshire, and more. The group is also expanding its adults-only offering, providing more options for those seeking a child-free getaway.

The full 2026 Premier Parks list is now live at **premier-parks.co.uk**. A printed brochure and downloadable digital version will be available from early January.

CAMP OUT WITH US

Tickets are on sale now for Campervan Campout Festival 2026, with only 1,000 camping pitches available — and after last year's sell-out, early booking is strongly advised!

Returning for its fourth year, the event has already become one of the highlights of the UK vanlife calendar — and this year it's set to be even bigger. There's live music all day with big headline acts on Friday, Saturday and Sunday as well as the VDub Radio Silent Disco. Spartan Campers will be headline sponsor for the 2026 event and the main entertainment hub will now be known as The Spartan Campers Stage.

Sax sensation Ellis Sax adds infectious energy to the stage, while Marvin Humes' Noughties Baby show delivers pure nostalgia with floor-filling 2000s anthems.

The Campout Hub hosts free talks and workshops from top vanlife personalities and there's also a wellness sanctuary plus Vanlife Eats cooking demos and workshops.

● Secure your camping pitch or day tickets and find out about the full programme of 2026 Out & About Live Warners Shows at **outandaboutlive.co.uk/shows**

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MIDLANDS

CAMPERVAN Campout FESTIVAL
1-3 MAY 2026

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15-17 MAY 2026

THE EAST MIDLANDS
MOTORHOME & CAMPERVAN SHOW
NEWARK
12-14 JUNE 2026

THE NORFOLK
MOTORHOME & CAMPERVAN SHOW
NORFOLK
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THE WESTERN
MOTORHOME & CAMPERVAN SHOW
MALVERN
21-23 AUGUST 2026

THE SOUTHWEST
MOTORHOME & CAMPERVAN SHOW
SHEPTON
11-13 SEPTEMBER 2026

THE SEASON FINALE
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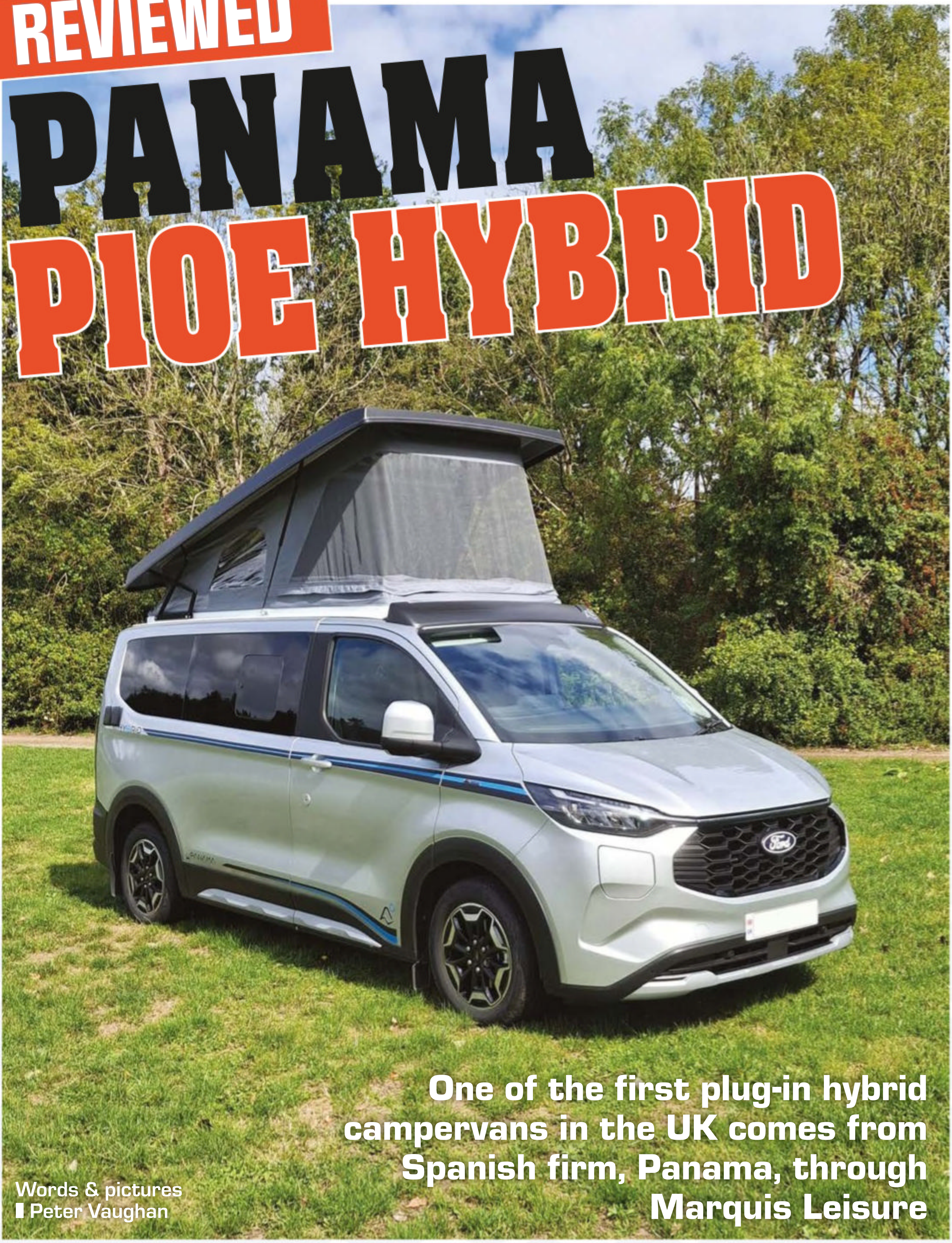
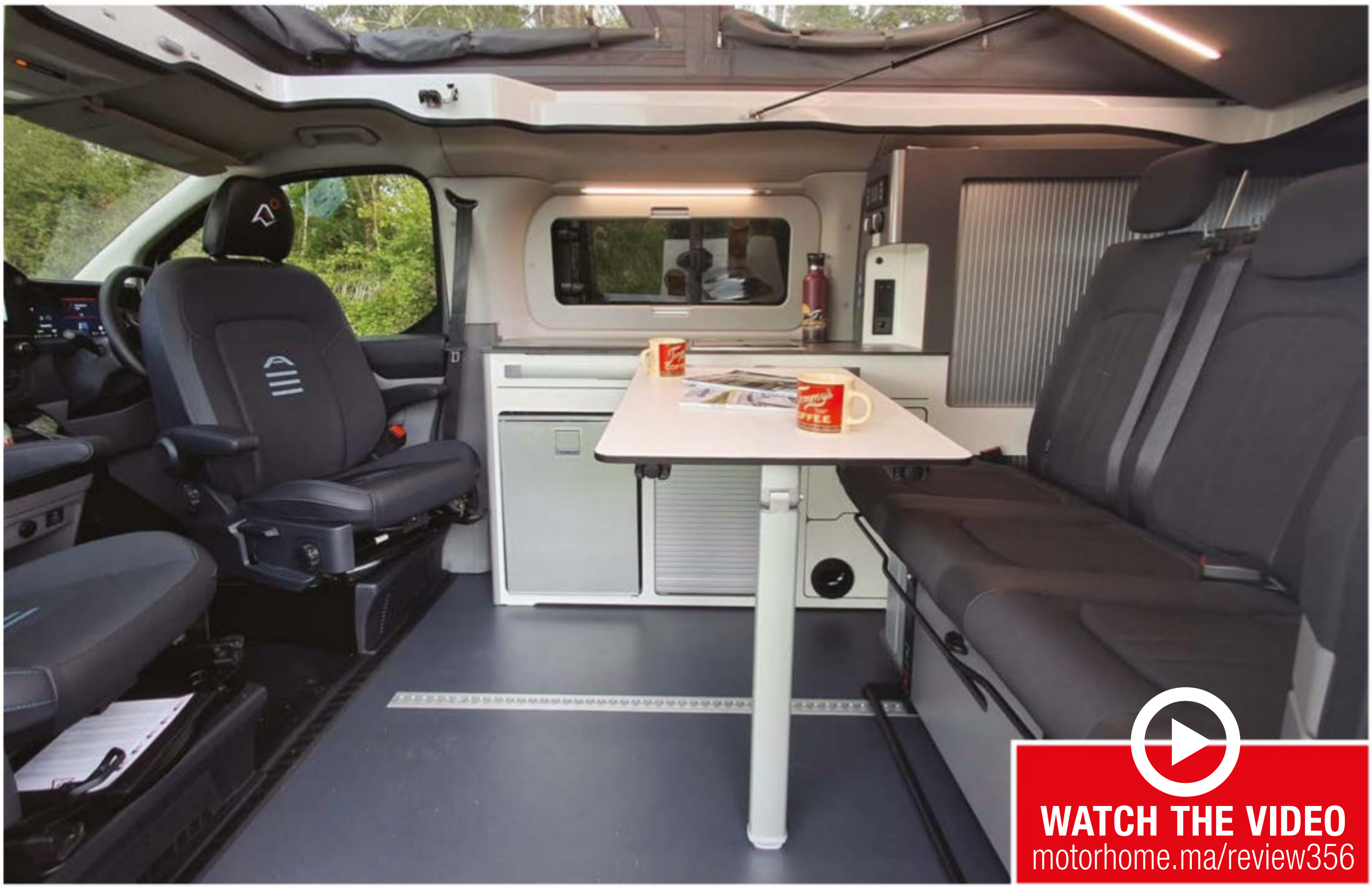
REVIEWED

PANAMA PIOE HYBRID



One of the first plug-in hybrid campervans in the UK comes from Spanish firm, Panama, through Marquis Leisure

Words & pictures
Peter Vaughan



WATCH THE VIDEO
motorhome.ma/review356

Here's a first. In over four decades of testing campervans and motorhomes, I've never had a hybrid-powered 'van for full review before – and that's despite the Toyota Prius having gone on sale here 25 years ago.

But could this be the future of campervans? Volkswagen recently launched a hybrid version of its new Multivan-based California and the availability of Ford's Tourneo Custom as a PHEV (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle) may result in a lot more petrol/electric campers coming onto the market.

The first of those to be widely publicised is this Panama P10E, imported by nationwide dealership, Marquis Leisure. Indeed, this Spanish campervan brand is also something of a newbie, having first appeared in the UK (and these pages) almost exactly a year ago when we tested the then new P12.

Like the P12, this new P10E is based on a short-wheelbase Ford Tourneo Custom with a side kitchen layout, a sliding seat system and a pop-top roof. So, you might think that you could just thumb through your back issues to see the habitation side of Panama's latest creation. Not so. There are clear similarities in the design and fixtures and fittings but the P10E gets a higher spec and gas-free kitchen to go with its hybrid drivetrain. And, while the diesel-powered P12 still undercuts most rivals, despite a two-grand price rise for 2026, the P10E costs a whopping £18k more. That's a big premium to justify.

SILVER LINING

The P10E does look like a more expensive campervan than its sister model. Whereas the P12 is all-white, the hybrid comes in metallic silver with a contrasting black roof. There are different (racier) alloy wheels, too, as part of the Active spec Tourneo base. With bold black and blue stripes, colour-coded bumpers and mirrors, privacy glass and off-road-style skirts, this is a vehicle that attracted plenty of very positive comments from interested onlookers.

It's not short of kit, either. The sliding door has an electric soft-closing mechanism and the headlamps are full LED.

A reversing camera and front and rear parking sensors are almost *de rigueur* in this class of vehicle now, while the full gamut of assistance systems includes Lane-Keeping Alert with automatic centring, Speed Sign Recognition, Hill Start Assist and Side Wind Stabilisation.

New features (compared with the P12) are the latest Pre-Collision Assist, adaptive cruise control with Stop & Go and Blind Spot Assist.

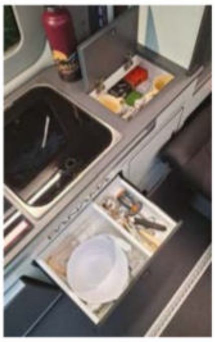
A wireless phone charging station has also been added in the centre console and there's keyless entry and starting, too.

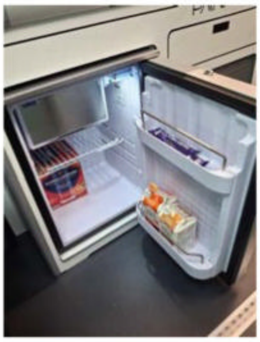
PROS

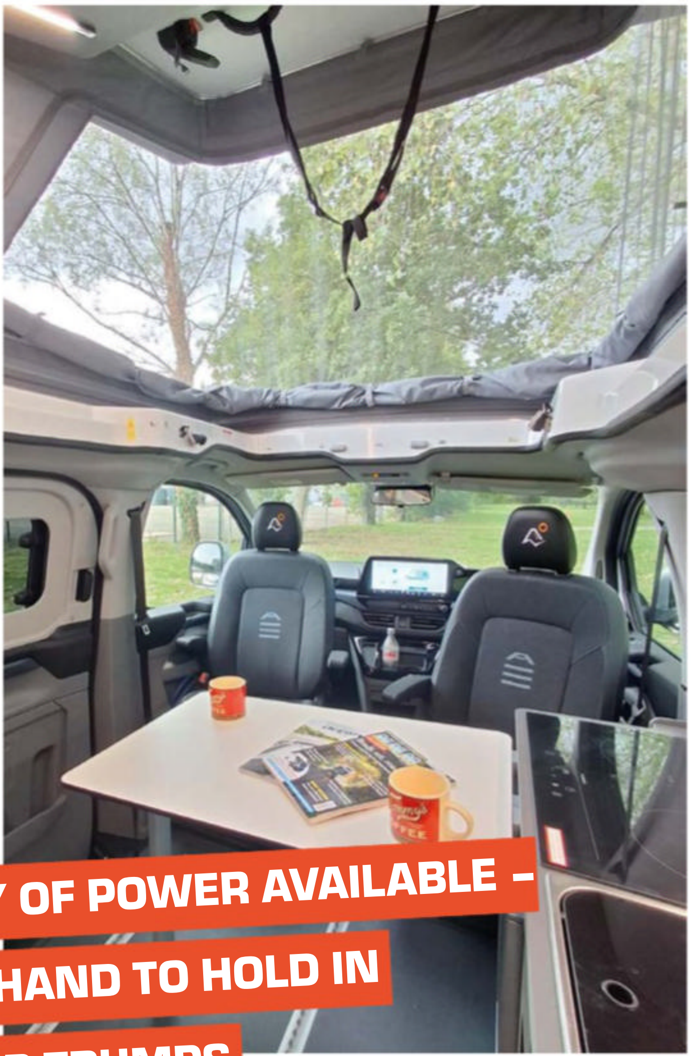
- Five-seater with Isofix
- Potentially low running costs
- Gas-free camping
- Sliding seat for versatility

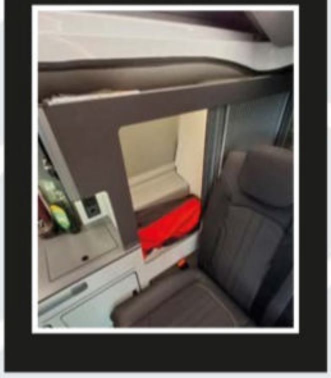
CONS

- Pop-top offers limited daylight
- Lack of kitchen storage
- Heavily tinted windows with small opening sections









THERE'S PLENTY OF POWER AVAILABLE – THIS IS A GOOD HAND TO HOLD IN CAMPERVAN TOP TRUMPS

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

The real difference, of course, is the powertrain, which is already proven in the Kuga SUV. It swaps the familiar 2-litre turbo-diesel for a 2.5-litre Atkinson cycle petrol motor and an 11.8kWh battery.

Unlike the (four-wheel drive) hybrid California, it remains front-wheel drive whether power is coming from fossil fuel or electricity.

And there's plenty of power – with 232hp available, this is a good hand to hold in campervan Top Trumps. Three drive modes – Auto EV, EV Now and EV Later – allow you to choose when to use the battery power, or simply let the Ford make the decision for itself.

It always seems to pull away – in eery silence – as an electric vehicle, even when showing zero EV range on the fully digital dashboard. Then, when the engine cuts in, you are aware of the change but it's not intrusive unless you've stamped on the accelerator – in which case, the rate of get up and go might surprise other drivers. This campervan is certainly not slow...

The clever bit is revealed by the almost hypnotic dial on the left of the display that swings clockwise (like a rev counter) when you're summoning more performance and flicks anticlockwise (in green) every time you come off the accelerator or (more dramatically) when you brake. It almost becomes a competition to keep the dial green as much as possible, as this means you're topping up the EV battery, gaining free miles.

The reality of this is that you're driving on electric power more than you'd think. Setting off for home in Lincolnshire from the South West Motorhome & Campervan Show at Shepton Mallet, the Panama was showing a modest 15 miles of EV range and, yet, as I pulled onto my drive, it told a very different story – of the 199.8 miles of mostly A roads covered, 71.1 of those miles had been fuelled electrically.

Diving deeper into the trip computer also revealed an mpg figure of 43.2 – better than I'd have expected from a diesel model and using cheaper unleaded fuel.

Of course, the real beauty of this hybrid system will be when you can charge at home. From a domestic supply, sources at Ford suggest that a full battery can be achieved in five hours for less than a pound (on a cheap overnight electricity tariff). Pure EV range is claimed to be 32 miles, which seemed to be a realistic figure in mild September weather (it'll be less in winter).

You can, of course, also plug in when you're out and about, but that's more expensive. Fully charging the empty EV battery at a Blink public charger in Wells, Somerset, cost £8.10, which seems rather dear for the electric mileage gained.

The key thing is that, unlike in a purely electric vehicle, there's never any range anxiety – and never a requirement to search out a charging station if you don't want to. You could do short commutes and errand runs, or school pick-ups, during the week, relying on the battery (charged at home), then have a range that's comparable to a diesel campervan for holidays and weekends away, simply filling up with petrol as and when required. The petrol tank, at 63 litres, is a similar size to many diesel vehicles.

Driving the PHEV Tourneo is also a pleasure. The part-leather cab seats have lots of adjustment (including lumbar support) and twin armrests apiece, and they have three-stage bottom warmers. The leather steering might be a slightly odd squared-off shape but it's comfortable to hold and, again, has plenty of adjustment.

You press a button to start – wait for some noise, then remember that none is coming – and the electric parking brake releases automatically. The SYNC 4 system's 13in touchscreen displays the navigation clearly from your phone. This is driving made simple, the only fly in the ointment being the loud road noise – perhaps more noticeable because there's so little else to make a din.

FAMOUS FIVE

The P10E has the same Mobiframe sliding seat system as the P12, making this comfortably a five-seater campervan (with two Isofix points in the rear). Here, though, you can't add extra seats as the reduced (465kg) payload is insufficient. What you can do is secure the seat in any position along its floor rails, simply by pushing down the locking bar with your foot. Moved forward, you can bring kiddies closer to parents, while trips to well-known Swedish flatpack furniture stores will be no problem with a load length of up to 1.45m behind the bench.

Panama has addressed one criticism of the P12, in which the under-seat space is open into the rear boot, so contents can slide forward unhindered. The new camper has a central drawer beneath the bench and a rather small tambour-doored compartment on each side. It's definitely an improvement, although there's still a gap on the offside and the drawer was almost filled by the ladder for the roof bed – we'd simply leave that at home.

Even with the seat in its usual camping position, there's still a large boot area with room for wellies, mains lead, etc, at floor level and bedding on the rear section of mattress. The table is now mounted in a zipped pocket on the inside of the tailgate, where there are also downlights and folding hanging rails. An external shower (cold only) is also fitted here.

The elevating roof – from German specialist, SCA – is also inherited from the original Panama model. It offers up to 2.25m of headroom and has a panoramic opening (but flyscreened) section at the front. However, as we've repeatedly noted with this pop-top, there's very limited daylight up top when the weather's not good enough to fully open it up. It does appear to be better suited to the Costas than the Cotswolds.

SPRING TIME

Perhaps the best aspect of this rising roof is the upstairs bed, which has a 1.94m by 1.18m mattress mounted on Caraflex 20 plastic springs for comfort. Up top, there are also flexible wand reading lights (with built-in USBs) that can double up when you're sitting in the swivelled cab chairs.

Down below, the Mobiframe seat is easy to convert into a bed that leaves room to access the fridge, get undressed or use the Porta Potti. It's a slightly wider bed than in some rival campervans and you sleep on the reverse side to the seating, so it's completely flat.

All just like the P12, although here you have cassette blinds at all the rear windows, rather than cost-cutting stick-on screens. Silver screens are still used in the cab and there's still no light over the tailgate (despite previous promises), something

FACT FILE

PANAMA P10E HYBRID
Price from £79,995
As tested £79,995

Berths 4
Travel seats 5
Warranty Two years habitation, three years base vehicle, five years water ingress
Type Approval Full GB Approval
Length 5.04m
Width 2.15m
Height 2.06m
Gross vehicle weight 3,245kg
Payload 465kg

BASE VEHICLE
Type Ford Tourneo Custom Active PHEV
Engine Plug-in hybrid with 2.5-litre petrol engine and 11.8kWh battery, 232hp, front-wheel drive, CVT automatic gearbox

KITCHEN
Cooker Dometic two-ring (one 1,000W, one 1,300W) induction hob
Fridge Isotherm 42-litre compressor

BEDS
Lower double 1.89m x 1.18m
Roof bed 1.94m x 1.18m

ESSENTIALS
Fresh water 50 litres (inboard)
Waste water 32 litres (underslung)
Space/water heating 1kW electric blown-air space heating, no hot water
Gas None
Leisure battery 90Ah AGM

OPTIONS
Fitted to test vehicle None
Other options available Towbar (£995), 200W solar panel (£899), Thule awning (£1,195)

THANK YOU

Marquis Leisure
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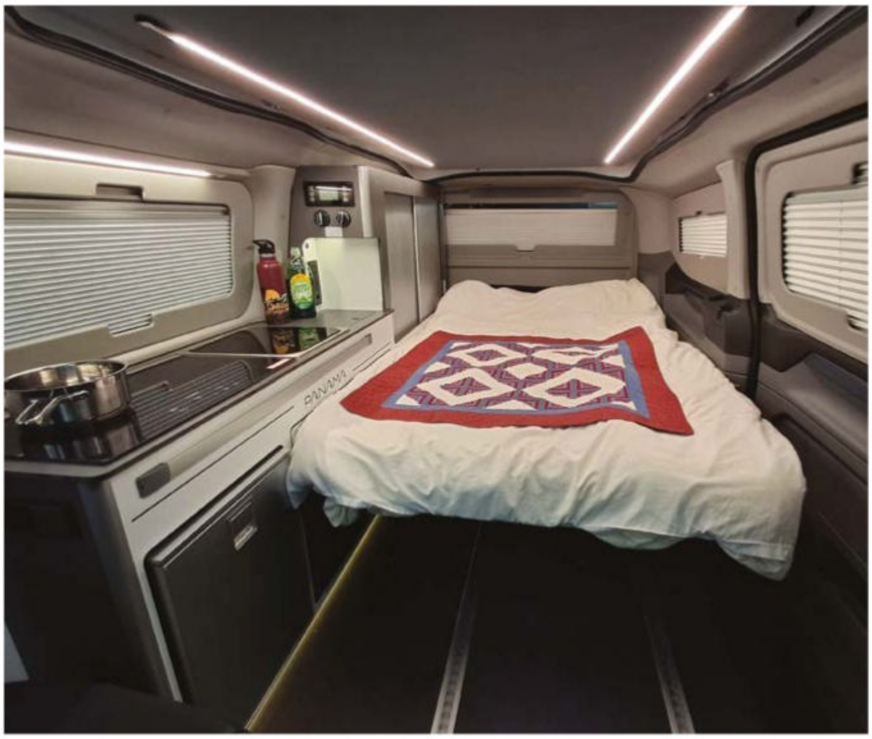

sorely missed as you snuggle down with a good book (or *Campervan*) at bedtime.

GOING PRO

We've saved the Panama's most unusual feature until last and that's one it gets from the base vehicle – the Ford Pro Power Onboard. This taps into the vehicle's EV battery via a 2.3kW inverter to give you mains power even when you're not hooked up. To use it, the vehicle must first be switched on via the start button, the power supply must be selected on the SYNC 4 display and a three-pin socket has to be plugged in (found in a cupboard in the boot). As long as you have the vehicle's petrol tank at least a quarter full, you can have 230V mains power while camping off-grid.

The Pro Power Onboard system is used to power the campervan's only three-pin socket (in the galley), the induction hob and the 1kW blown-air heater. However, Panama warns against overloading the system and says the heating must be turned down to position one (of three) when you're cooking. Of course, all these features are also available when hooked up to the mains and, if you arrive with limited (or zero) EV range, they will still function as the petrol engine will kick in to generate the necessary power.

The P10E also has a 100Ah leisure battery (surprisingly, not lithium) to run the compressor fridge, water pump, interior lights and USBs. You'd also expect a solar panel to be fitted as standard but that's an £899 option (for 200W).

Going gas-free isn't the only difference with this galley, versus the P12 – it might look similar at first glance but it actually differs in a number of ways. The fridge capacity (42 litres) is carried over and the sink is, once again, fed from an inboard tank. Likewise, there's a bespoke cupboard for a Porta Potti 335 loo. What's lacking here is storage for non-perishable food, pots and pans, crockery, etc.

A small drawer provided room for two bowls, two glasses and some cutlery. A tiny top-loading cupboard housed my coffee mugs, some bread rolls and Nespresso pods. That's all the space there is in the kitchen.

Alongside the back seat is a wardrobe that has neither a hanging rail nor the shelves that it so badly needs. Beyond that, another tambour door (in the boot area) does reveal a tall shelved space (where I kept my pans) but it's hardly convenient for the cook.

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VERDICT

Ford's plug-in hybrid Tourneo makes a great alternative to diesel campervans and could be cheap to run if you recharge at home, while Panama's use of the vehicle battery for gas-free cooking and heating is innovative. Sadly, though, the ultra-keen pricing of the diesel-driven P12 is lost with the new hybrid P10E, which makes its lack of storage much harder to overlook.

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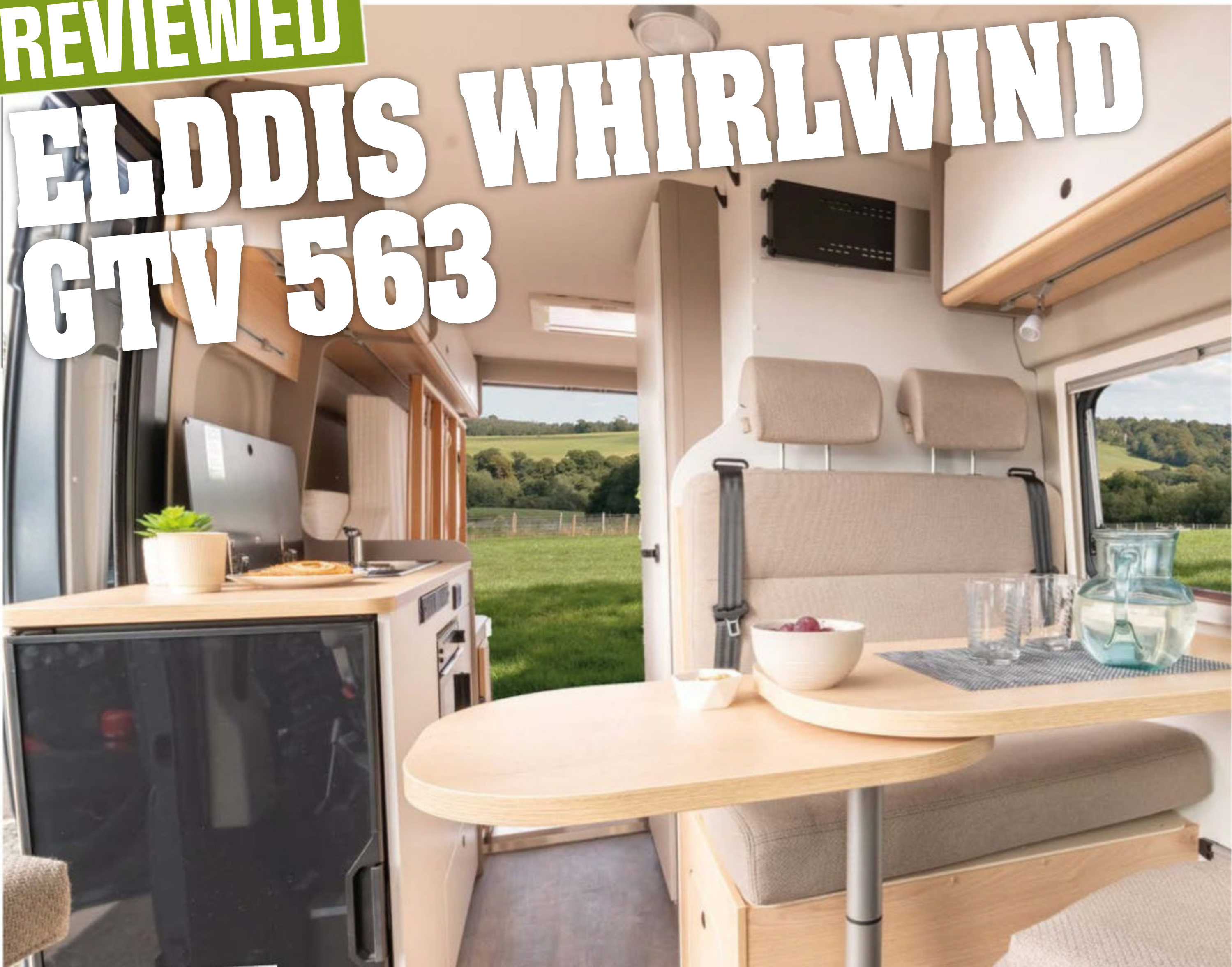
REVIEWED

ELDDIS WHIRLWIND GTV 563



A new entry-level campervan range

Words | Iain Duff

Launched at Newcastle racecourse, UK manufacturer, Elddis, has come galloping out of the gates with its new budget campervan. And with a starting price of under £58,000 and three models available – 5.4m, 6m and 6.4m – you don't need to be the Aga Khan to snap up one of these Peugeot Boxer-based campers.

This is very much an entry-level campervan, but it does offer a choice of either a standard fixed high-top or a pop-top on top, and the spec sheet doesn't feel too budget.

While some manufacturers have a lengthy (and occasionally baffling) list of optional extras, Elddis has kept it simple. You'll have to pay extra for an automatic gearbox (£3,246) or that pop-top (£5,499), but otherwise it's a case of 'what you see is what you get' and what you get is a typically continental fixed bed campervan with all the stuff you need on board – plus a few features that you might not expect at the price.

Metallic grey paint, 16in alloy wheels, a Thule roll-out awning, a 10in infotainment unit with reversing camera and wireless Apple CarPlay/Android Auto, automatic lights and wipers, an electric step and flyscreen for the sliding door. There's cable

WATCH THE VIDEO
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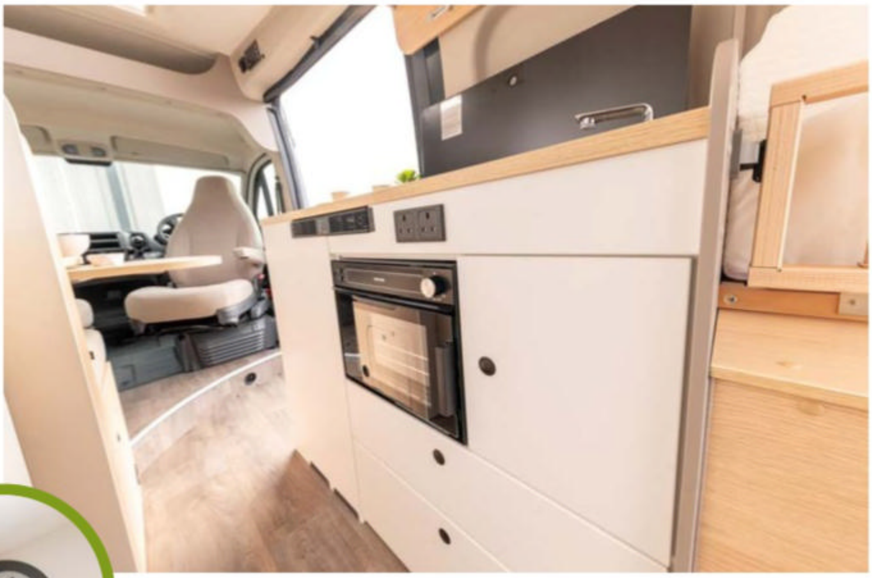


preparation for the addition of a solar panel by your dealer, storage for two 11kg gas cylinders, a 100-litre fresh water tank and a 90-litre waste tank. Even a roll-out awning is included.

The longest 6.36m version (called the 563) here costs £59,690 and sleeps up to three, with lengthways fixed beds at the back and an additional 1.85m-long single bed formed from the seating area. Choosing the pop-top version will add a further two berths, but it further reduces the payload, which is already tight – 167kg with a manual gearbox, 112kg for the automatic on a 3,500kg van. An upgrade to 3,650kg will be virtually essential.

The fixed bed at the rear is more conjoined singles than a double and measures 1.92m at its longest point. A small foldaway step makes access to the bed a little easier.

As usual, there's a good storage area under the bed which can be accessed from both inside the campervan and from the rear doors. There's more storage in the overhead lockers above the bedroom on both sides.

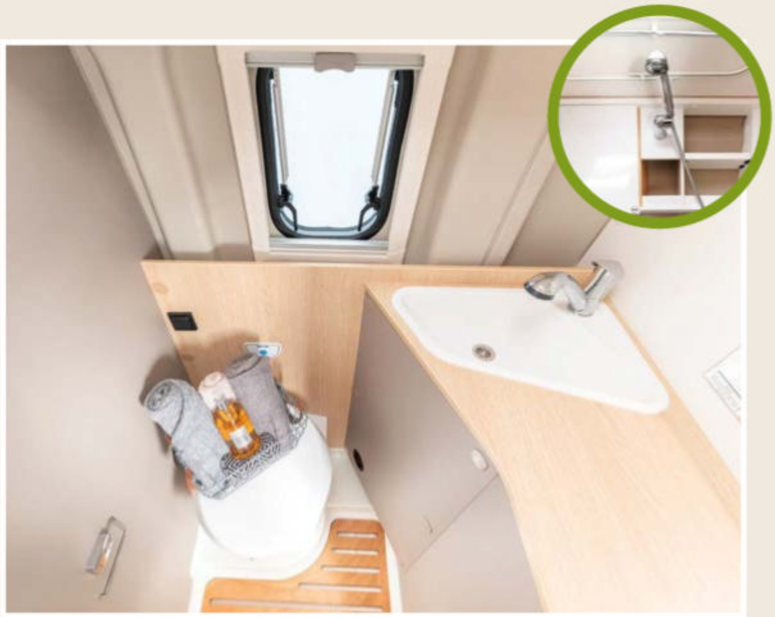
The kitchen features more high-level storage, a sink, a two-burner Can gas stove, and two mains electric sockets. The surprise here is that a Thetford oven comes as standard. Completing the galley, a 90-litre compressor fridge sits at the end of the kitchen unit, by the sliding door where it can easily

PROS

- Good value
- Awning and oven as standard
- Transparent pricing with minimal options

CONS

- Limited payload
- Shower has a curtain



be accessed from outside. Above the cooler is a decent amount of worktop, without having to deploy a flimsy flap.

Opposite the kitchen, the washroom has a corner washbasin with a generous area of worktop adjacent. There's a combined tap and showerhead and a Thetford swivel cassette toilet. There's a decent amount of washroom storage and a slatted wooden duckboard for the base of the shower but you'll need to use the curtain when showering.

From the washroom, you move forward into the lounge, where four people can comfortably sit around the extendable table – two on the half-dinette and two on the swivel cab seats. The décor is fairly basic with light wood furniture and plain upholstery, but it's a reasonably bright space with an overhead skylight but no overcab sunroof as the shelf here is retained, limiting headroom. The sliding door, unusually for a campervan from a UK brand, is on the driver's side, but then this new range comes from an Erwin Hymer Group factory in Poland rather than County Durham.

Heating and hot water comes from a Truma Combi 4 system, running off gas only, while the windows in the living area sit proud of the bodywork, as befits a budget model.

FACT FILE

ELDDIS WHIRLWIND GTV 563
Base vehicle Peugeot Boxer
Price from £59,690
Berths 3 (+2 with pop-top)
Travel seats 3/4
Length 6.36m
Width 2.05m
Height 2.67m
Gross weight 3,500kg (3,650kg with pop-top)
Payload 167kg

VERDICT

The Whirlwind GTV is an entry-level campervan that has some surprises in its spec, including the awning, oven and metallic paint. Its simple design faces plenty of competition and its limited payload will force many to opt for a chassis upgrade.

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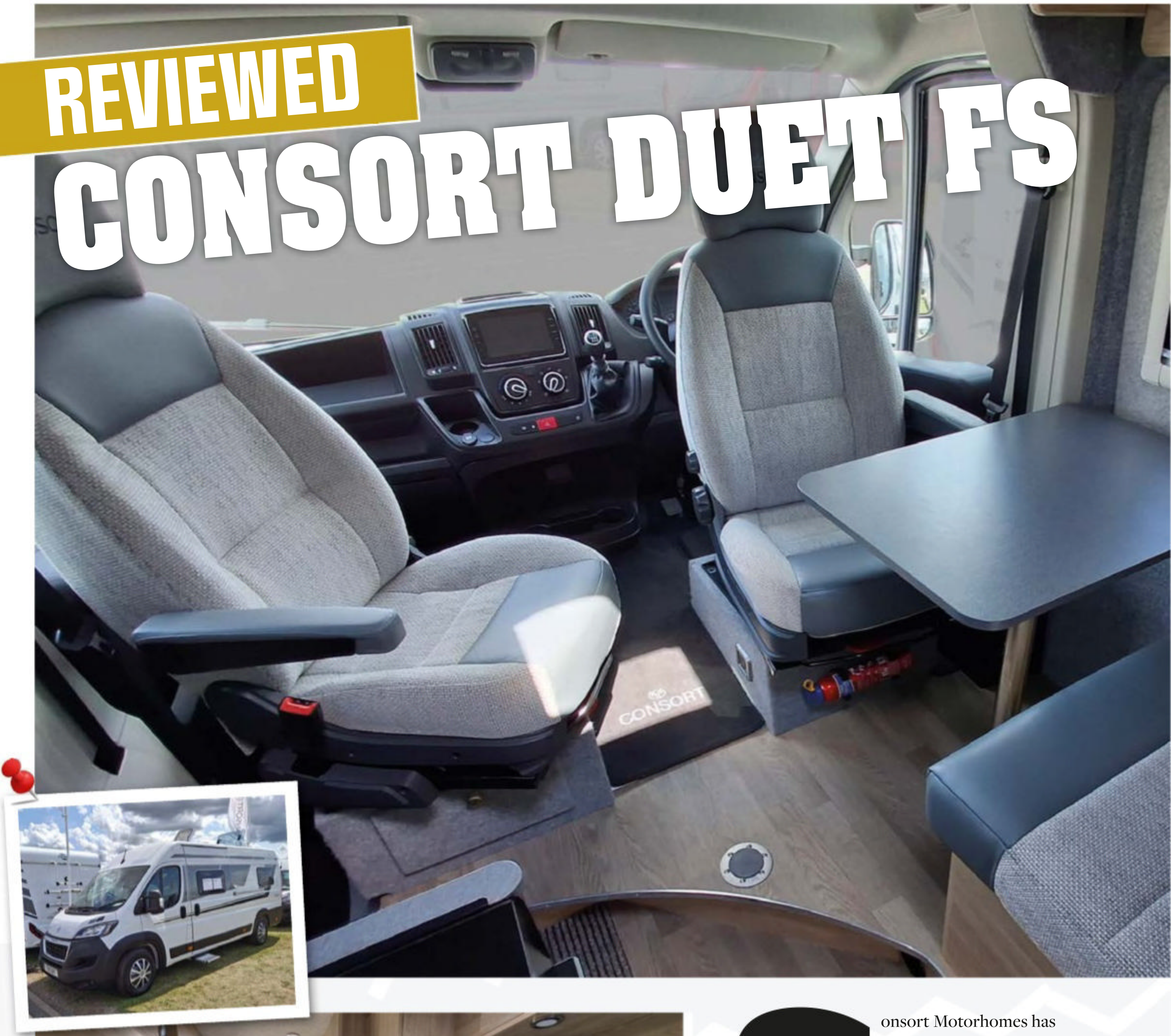
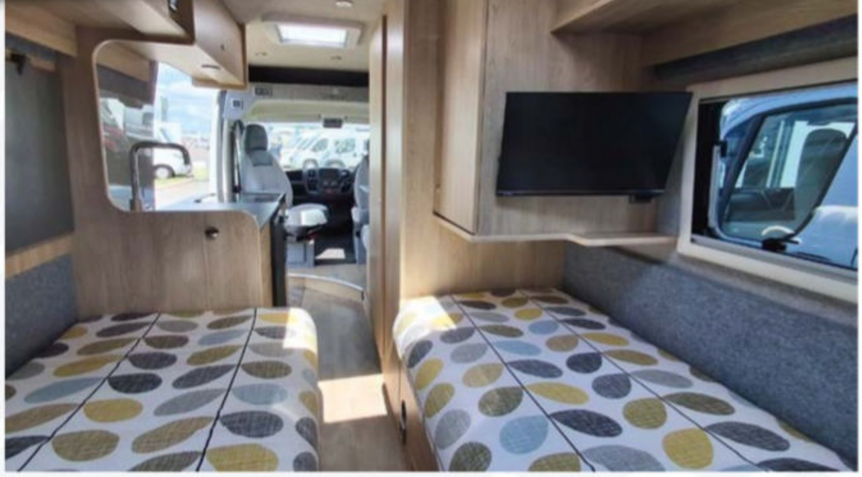
REVIEWED

CONSORT DUET FS



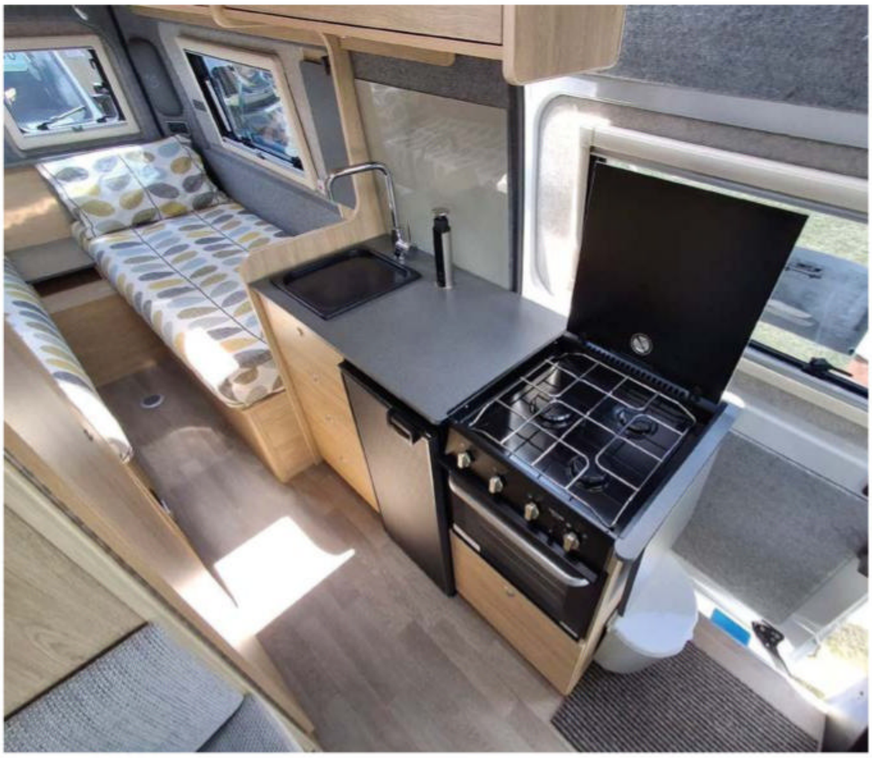


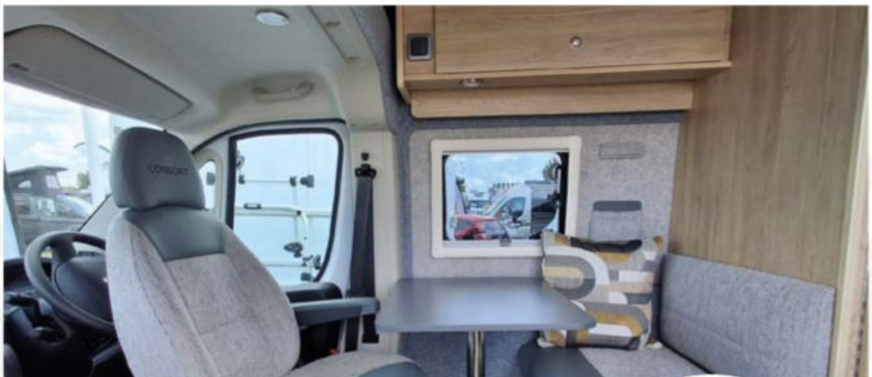
Consort Motorhomes has developed quite a following amongst those seeking a high-quality rear lounge campervan with an emphasis on practicality, born out of Jane and Scot Naylor's many years of using their campervans. Detractors might say that Consort's six models all look much the same but you can choose lengths from 5.41m to 6.36m and now an increasing variety of versions within each.

This Duet differs from the established Oslo in the longest Fiat/Peugeot panel van by offering extra lounging space up front, not just the swivel cab seats. The Leeds-based converter still shies away

Generous single beds replace the usual rear lounge

Words & pictures | Peter Vaughan





from having any more than two berths or two travel seats, but here you do have an extra pew (albeit one for on-site use only). On paper, it looks like the usual half-dinette but here it's a single seat (so not impinging on room to walk through) and with a correspondingly more compact table. Using the rotated driver's chair, it makes a good little dining area for two folk, even if the extra seat is bolt upright with only a thin backrest. Meanwhile, the Duet's design also allows this space to double up as a lounger when you slide the cab seat out, recline it right back and pop your socks on the back seat.

In either snoozing or scoffing mode, the Duet gives you an alternative space to the traditional Consort rear U-shaped lounge – especially useful when the latter has been turned into twin beds or a king-sized double. However, this Duet – wearing the 'FS' suffix – offers a different slant on the company's typical design. Here, the back of the campervan is dedicated to a pair of fixed single beds.

This isn't a twin bed campervan in the continental idiom, though. The beds are mounted low, like at home, for easy access. They come with a choice of mattress firmness and retain a proper aisle in between, with a coffee table sandwiched at the head end. And they don't fold or lift to create a garage, although there's still a full-width locker accessible through the rear doors for your outdoor furniture, etc (just like in the rear lounge Duet). You get reading lights, windows all around, a large skylight and USB sockets, too.

The kitchen is unchanged and runs forward from

PROS

- Comfortable rear bedroom with low-mounted beds
- Choice of mattress firmness
- Gas or gas-free kitchen options
- Peugeot version is good value

CONS

- Automatic model is on 4,000kg chassis
- No rear travel seats
- No overcab sunroof option

FACT FILE

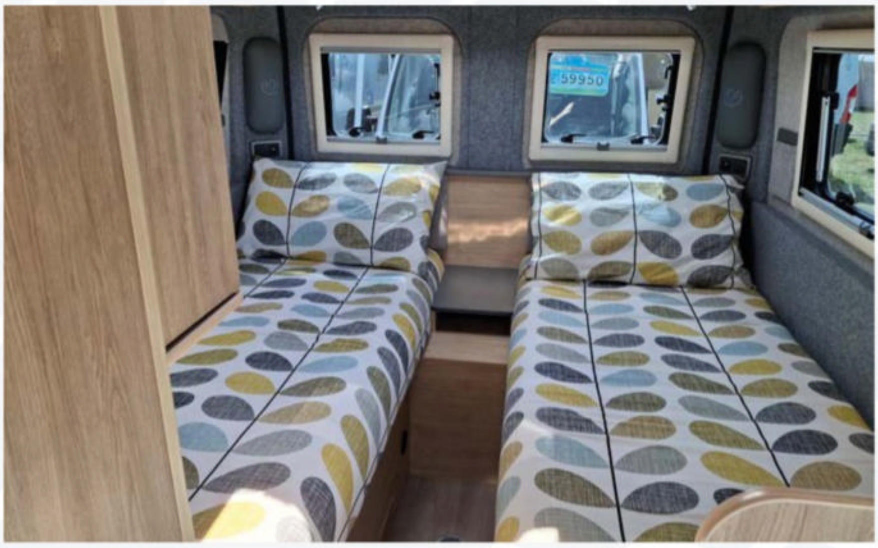
CONSORT DUET FS
Base vehicle Peugeot Boxer or Fiat Ducato
Price from £78,950 (pre-reg Peugeot), £86,950 (brand-new Fiat)
Berths 2
Travel seats 2
Length 6.36m
Width 2.05m
Height 2.58m
Gross weight 3,500kg (4,000kg with automatic transmission)
Payload 450kg

the end of the nearside bed, finishing partway across the sliding door. It includes an oven/grill and three-burner hob and an 85-litre under-counter compressor fridge, as well as a surprisingly generous amount of worktop space (even more with extension flaps at either end).

But you don't have to stay with this conventional concept. Consort is offering a more off-grid approach for those looking for a gas-free campervan. In that case, the lithium battery is upgraded from the standard 105Ah to 230Ah (or even 460Ah) and the solar panel doubles from 160W to 320W, while a 2kW inverter allows mains appliances to be used without hook-up. Truma's diesel/electric heating replaces the usual gas/electric version.

Without the standard 25-litre gas tank, a larger (125-litre) fresh water tank can be fitted underneath and, of course, the £3,500 gas-free option includes an induction hob and microwave in place of gas-powered cooking. Where Consort is experimenting is with the option to go without fitted cooking appliances. Why not just have lots of worktop and carry an air fryer and portable induction hob? These can be stowed away for travel and plugged into the power tower (which can now have items plugged in when it is retracted into the counter) when required. It's an approach that could catch on...

Then there's Consort's cost-saving offer of a white pre-registered Peugeot Boxer base vehicle in place of an unregistered silver Fiat Ducato with more spec (10in touchscreen, alloys, etc) for £8k more. Just note that the automatic model (at £89,950) is only available as a 4,000kg campervan (requiring a C1 licence).



VERDICT

Always looking to serve every part of the two-berth Fiat-based campervan sector, Consort's Duet FS adds extra seating up front and a proper bedroom in the back. There are interesting options for going gas-free, too.

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LIFE BEYOND BRICKS

HI

History geek, Tash, recalls an educational visit to Cambridge

Aside from travelling around working at the Out and About Live shows, I also travel around the country with my husband's work (when I'm not on solo trips, of course). His work recently took us to Norfolk and that got me thinking about one of my early solo campervan trips (in the Transporter) to Cambridge and then Norfolk.

I went on that road trip with a fellow solo female camper and we started in Cambridge. It's somewhere I had always wanted to go because of its beautiful architecture and rich history, so I was buzzing when my friend suggested we go there on our way to Norfolk.

Stopover-wise, we were winging it, with help from park4night and Google. That was a huge part of the fun! We booked our first stop over coffee at the services and then headed off to Cherry Hinton Caravan & Motorhome Club site in Cambridge.

The site is set in part of an old quarry works so it makes for a really interesting setting. It is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and just across the road is a section open to the public where you can go for a stroll. My friend has a dog so it was perfect for an evening walk.

You can catch a bus into the city itself, it's approximately a 25-minute journey, but one of the advantages of having a smaller 'van is it fits anywhere. So, once we were all pitched up, we jumped into one 'van and drove in for a mooch and some food.

The city was as beautiful as I had imagined. Full of character but with that modern twist I love, where old meets new but the new is sympathetic to its setting. We wandered around, scouting out any places of interest we wanted to see next day.

The campsite provided a pleasant stay and after checking out the next morning, we drove in to grab breakfast. Then it was a visit to King's College Cambridge. Oh. My. Days.

I knew the college had huge historical significance and strong links to Tudor history but I didn't realise it had features left over specifically from the time of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, which is one of my favourite periods of Tudor history.

The grand choir screen was commissioned by Henry to celebrate his marriage to Anne and, to my knowledge, the inscriptions of their initials in the woodwork are some of the only examples remaining. I'm pretty sure he had everything else removed after the disastrous (and sad... poor Anne) end to their union.

OK sorry, I'm back. I had a little geek out there! We opted not to go for a ride on the river as by the time we had finished our exploration of Cambridge (and I had finished marvelling at the ornate stonework) and had lunch, we wanted to get going to our next stop – Norfolk!

We did make a pit stop in Ely en route to check out the famous cathedral (plus walk the dog) and that, too, was fantastic. But I have to be honest, would top the chapel at King's College for me.

Reliving this trip has brought a smile to my face so I'm excited to share more with you next time. And hope that if you haven't already been, this will inspire you to add Cambridge to your list of travel destinations in England.

♥ Read more about Tash and Jon's adventures at **lifebeyondbricks.co.uk** and follow them on social media

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OFF GRID POWER SOLUTIONS

Camping, Caravan, RV - OTHER PRODUCTS: Winches, Jacks & Wheel Chocks

PowerOak - ENERGY STORAGE
AC50s 500Wh
Ideal for wild camping power!

SPECIFICATION
- *500Wh / 135200mAh capacity*
- *300 watt maximum output*

CHARGING
- *Home - AC 220v, 50Hz, 13amp*
- *Solar - 14-40v, max. 120w*
- *Car - 12v cigar lighter socket*
- *Generator - AC220v, 50 Hz*

OUTPUT
AC 220v, 50Hz, 2 sockets
Cigarette port, 12v
USB 5v x 3a, 4 sockets
Wireless, 10w charging

AC50s, 500Wh £199.50 +VAT (£239.40)
Strom 600 568Wh £249.00 +VAT (£298.80)

Solar panels (Foldable)
50w BPHD50 RRP £81.67 +VAT (£98)
100w BPHD100 RRP £123.33 +VAT (£148)

Strom 30i 2.1kw INVERTER GENERATOR
The perfect camping generator!
RRP £333.25 +VAT (£399.90)

SPECIFICATION
- *3.0kw starting output*
- *Genuine 2.1kw running output*
- *15% lower fuel consumption than competitors*
- *20% larger fuel tank than competitors*
- *Light weight - only 19.8kgs*
- *Ultra quiet - 53db at 7 metres*
- *Perfect sine wave output*
- *Ideal CPAP medical, small fridge, laptop*
- *LCD display showing power, volts & speed*
- *Patented technology of quiet dual fan*
- *Dual exhaust muffler & dual sound shielding*
- *Available black or camouflage finish*
- *Certificates - CS, EMC, EPA*
- *Exclusive to Rally Design in the UK*

Kudos 20" Wheel Lightweight Alloy Folding bicycle
- *Double height seat post*
- *Adjustable height handlebars*
- *6-speed Shimano gearing*
- *Revoshift quick gear change*
- *52 tooth chain ring*
- *Hydro-formed aero quality frame*
- *20" double wall rims, 20 x1.5 tyres*
- *Folded size 82 x 30 x 60*
- *Weight 12.9kg*

RRP £149.17 +VAT (£179.00)

Solar Lighting System
4 x 2w LED Lamps, Polychrystaline Solar
Set, BLIT04 RRP £45.75 +VAT (£54.90)

SPECIFICATION
- *8w x 11v solar panel, ally frame*
- *7.4v x 5200mah lithium battery*
- *4 x 2w high lumens LED lamps*
- *4 x 5mtr battery to lamp wires*
- *USB port phone charging*
- *Overcharge protection on battery*
- *Weight - 2.1kgs*
- *Full battery, (1) Light - 21 hours*
- *Full battery, (4) Lights - 5 hours*
- *CE Certification*

Rally Design

RALLY DESIGN LIMITED, UNIT 4, ST. AUGUSTINE'S BUSINESS PARK, ESTUARY WAY, SWALECLIFFE, KENT CT5 2QJ www.rallydesign.co.uk
• Since Covid-19 the best means of contact is by email - sales@rallydesign.co.uk

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GET INTO GEAR

Christmas Gift Special

Whether it's a stocking filler for a loved one or a present for a relative who you know is outdoors-obsessed, here's a selection of great campervan-related gifts that won't break the bank

OLPRO MAINS LEAD BAG

BAG FOR LIGHT

One of the best-selling products on the Out & About Shop, this simple storage bag for your mains lead is a lifesaver. It's built from tough 420D nylon to protect your leads from both the weather and from being bashed around on the move, as well as keeping them organised. All of which means that when you pitch up, you can get connected with ease.

Under £50

PRICE **£15**
BUY HERE **outandaboutshop.hooluh.co.uk/olpro-mains-lead-bag**

PERSONALISED MUG AND FLASK SET

FANCY A BREW?

A great addition to a Christmas stocking, this set of two mugs and an insulated flask all feature an attractive motorhome sketch and can be personalised with names, creating a totally unique and fun gift set!

Under £50

PRICE **£13**
BUY HERE **amzn.to/4onJKHM**

SHARON
IAN
LIFE ROCKS WHEN YOUR HOME ROLLS!

VANGO COMET LIGHT

LIGHT UP YOUR LIFE

Winner of Best Camping Lighting in the Out & About Live Camping Awards 2025, the Vango Comet Light really is a cut above your average lantern. Not only does the LED light have three powerful settings, it can be used as a handheld torch, as a table lamp and, using its telescopic extension, as an angled floor light. There's some real substance to back up its novel style!

Under £50

PRICE **£40.99**
BUY HERE **amzn.to/3J58GEX**

Home is where you park it.

"HOME IS WHERE YOU PARK IT" MAT

HOME SWEET HOME

If you can't buy a novelty, themed present at Christmas then when can you? This fun doormat from Quest Leisure features a playful image of a classic VW campervan exploring a mountainous region, with the motif of "Home is where you park it". It's just a bit of fun but this is also genuinely an inspiring motto to live by!

PRICE **£11**
BUY HERE **fave.co/4qmn6kQ**

Under £50

IT'S A MUG'S GAME

LIFEVENTURE ONE-TOUCH THERMAL MUG

Fitting neatly into the drinks holder of your car, motorhome or campervan, this travel mug from camping specialist, Lifeventure, is a great gift for anyone who loves adventure travel. Its food-grade stainless steel is tough and resistant to dents, as well as avoiding acquiring the flavour of its contents. The One-Touch 360 Lid means you can sip from any direction and close the mug with one hand, too.

PRICE £20
BUY HERE amzn.to/4n659Ef

Under £50

IT'S GAME ON

TABLETOP GAMING GOLD MYSTERY BOX

If you're a fan of board games but are getting tired of playing Monopoly every road trip then check this great idea from Tabletop Gaming. For £29.99, you'll receive two mystery two board games worth £50, selected from the team's enormous collection of games. The reviews are brilliant, so it's well worth checking out!

PRICE £29.99
BUY HERE tabletopgaming.hooluh.co.uk/gold-mystery-box

Under £50

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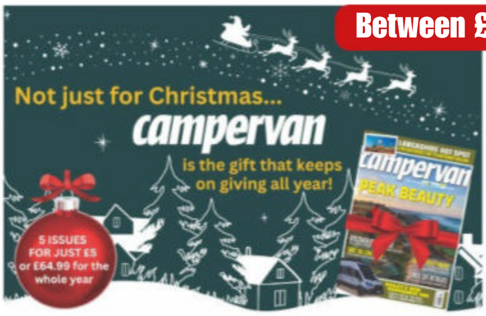
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BUY HERE motorhome.ma/cpvnxmasgift25

AEROPRESS GO PLUS

COFFEE ON THE GO

The latest incarnation of this popular and portable coffee maker, the AeroPress Go Plus fuses the unique functionality that AeroPress is renowned for with a high-performance flask, enabling you to enjoy fresh coffee on the move. With a couple of innovative design features, the Go Plus is a smart option for those who really like their coffee.

PRICE £85
BUY HERE amzn.to/42Gqm0g

Between £50-£100

I'M NOT LOST, I'M EXPLORING
LIFEVENTURE

THE HEAT IS ON

LIFEVENTURE SUNDOWN BERBER-LINED BLANKET

Featuring an inspiring and playful image of an outdoors scene, rendered in calming hues of orange, blue and pink, this blanket from Lifeventure is perfect for the outdoor adventurer in your life. From sitting around the campfire to snuggling in your campervan, the Berber fleece backing on this blanket will keep you warm and cosy.

PRICE £50
BUY HERE amzn.to/4qanjr9

Between £50-£100

For more campervan accessories visit the Out & About Shop
outandaboutshop.hooluh.co.uk
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COLEMAN PRO 1.8L JUG

POUR IT LIKE A PRO

The Coleman Pro range features high-quality materials that can withstand outdoor adventures with ease. This 1.8-litre jug is made from rugged, copper-plated stainless steel that will help to keep drinks warm for up to 23 hours or chilled for up to 48 hours, and it features a removable silicone sleeve to prevent it from slipping on wet surfaces. It doesn't hurt that it looks bombproof, either.

PRICE £60
BUY HERE fave.co/4n8Piox

Between £50-£100

WARNERS SHOWS CAMPING TICKET

SHOW BUSINESS

Staged in major destinations around the UK, the Warners Shows team – part of the Out & About Live family – host a series of brilliant live shows and festivals for campervanners, motorhomers and caravanners. You'll enjoy live music and entertainment, family activities, a huge trade show area, expert seminars and much, much more. Give the gift of an incredible weekend with a multi-day camping ticket at one of these hugely popular shows!

BUY HERE outandaboutlive.co.uk/shows

Between £50-£100

ECO FUEGO EL CAMPO

RELIGHT MY FIRE

This innovative firepit will make a brilliant Christmas gift. Cosying up around a crackling flame before retreating to your warm camper is both great for the soul and pure Insta-gold. And while many campsites have restrictions on firepits, the El Campo from Eco Fuego is a truly green option. This wax firepit enables you to enjoy real flames without producing any embers or ash, and you extinguish it just by returning the lid.

PRICE £119
BUY HERE fave.co/42g8qt4

Over £100

YETI RAMBLER 34OZ FRENCH PRESS

COFFEE MATE

Since this is the second coffee-related item on this list, you might be able to tell what's on my mind as I write this – but this Yeti French Press certainly deserves its inclusion. This iconic and social-media-friendly brand produces premium outdoor accessories that look fantastic, and the Rambler is no exception. It has high-performance insulation, a filter for coffee grounds, and is dishwasher-safe. Finding this under the tree would make for a very good Christmas indeed.

PRICE £110
BUY HERE fave.co/48wud3K

Over £100

NEMO EQUIPMENT STARGAZE EVO-X

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

To paraphrase Bond, there are camping chairs and there are camping chairs – this is the latter. Nemo Equipment, an American camping manufacturer striding into the UK market with purpose, has created a truly remarkable product with the Stargaze Evo-X. It folds up no larger than a standard camping chair but the hammock-style seat swings and reclines from a robust frame, allowing you to relax in whichever position is most comfortable and, yes, to stargaze.

PRICE £169.95
BUY HERE fave.co/42gdL3J

Over £100

TENTBOX KITCHENBOX

READY, STEADY, COOK

You need to really like the person you're gifting this to but it is genuinely epic. A compact camp kitchen engineered to the same rigorous standards as this brand's rooftop tents, the KitchenBox from TentBox is a fantastic choice for campers of all types, whether you have a roof tent or not. Designed to fit neatly into a car boot, the KitchenBox folds down into a sleek black chest, which then expands with legs and side tables to create a full campsite kitchen set-up.

PRICE £495
BUY HERE outandaboutshop.hooluh.co.uk/tentbox-kitchenbox-camping-stove

Over £100

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